

# IN THESE TIMES

Renters  
Revolt  
Page 3

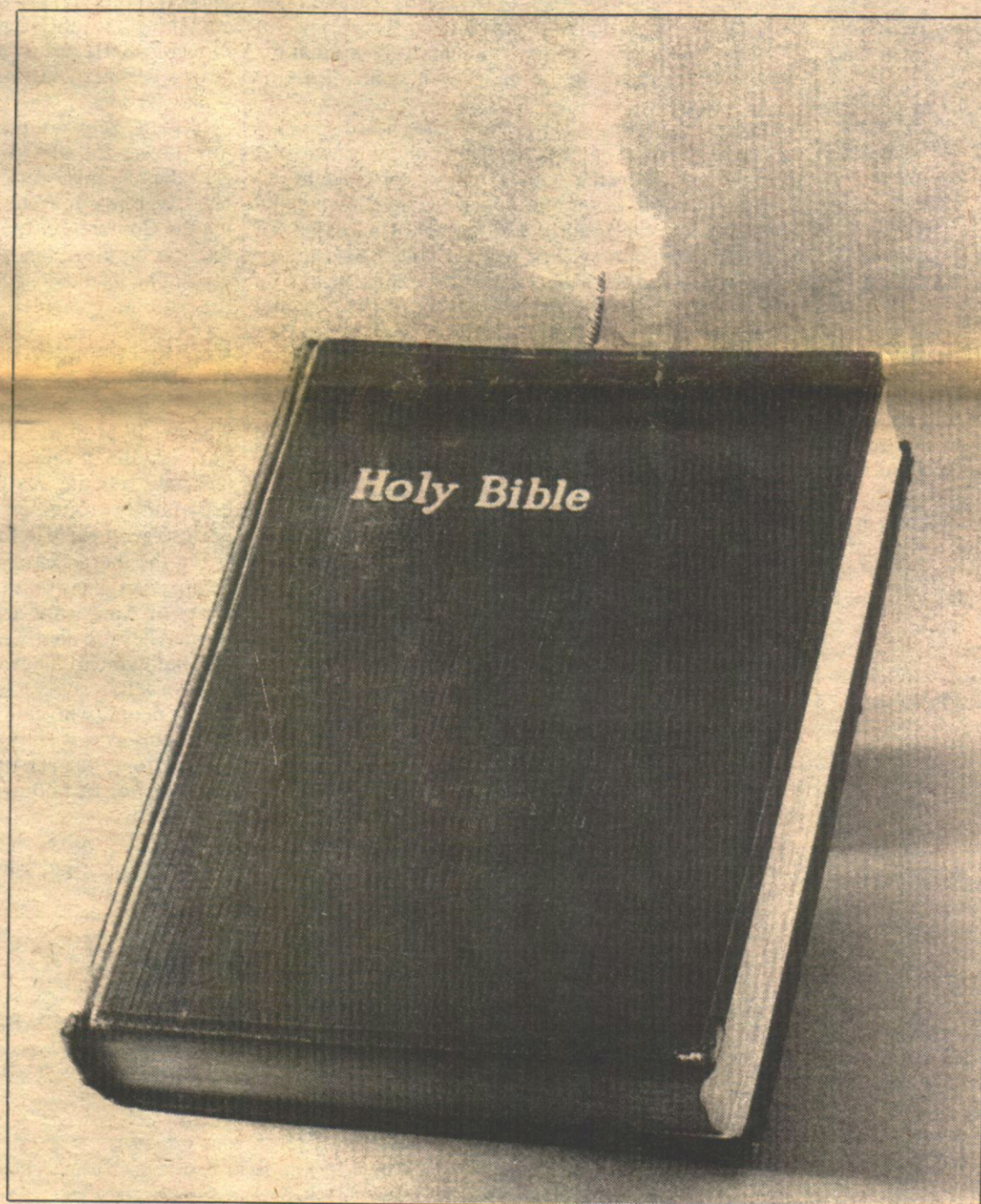


Vol. 2, No. 36

August 2-8, 1978

50 Cents

## HOW LONG, OH LORD?



The power of faith is a mighty weapon, subversive of established power. A special section looks at Christian witness.



# THE INSIDE STORY

JOHN JUDIS



Lee Webb, founder of the National Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies.

## Historic dilemma for the U.S. left

"The culprit is big business," Midge Miller, a middle-aged state representative from Wisconsin told an afternoon workshop on tax reform. "Until we turn it around and turn that anger into some reform of the economic system, we're fighting a losing battle."

At Sunday's plenary, Detroit city councilman Ken Cockrel was even more explicit in his indictment: "If we're really interested in shifting the tax burden," he said, "then we are really interested in abolishing the concept of private property."

Miller and Cockrel made their comments at the fourth annual National Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, which was held in St. Paul, Minn., July 13-16. They were among over 500 public officials, union staffers, community organizers, environmentalists, feminists and minority leaders who attended.

Not everyone at the Conference was a socialist or saw big business as the enemy. ACTION head Sam Brown expressed his disagreement with the anti-corporate emphasis. "The real problem is one of scale," he told me. "It's a problem of people feeling some involvement." New York City Council President Carol Bellamy made a similar effort to exonerate Chase Manhattan and Citibank in her discussion of New York's fiscal crisis.

But Bellamy and Brown were the exceptions. As at last fall's Democratic Agenda Conference in Washington, there were growing signs of a new left coalition, united around the understanding that "big business is the culprit." Where the Democratic Agenda conference showed the extent to which union leadership in the Machinists, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, the United Auto Workers, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees are edging toward such a coalition, the St. Paul Conference showed the wide interest that public officials and community organizations have in such a project.

### Immodest collection.

The Conference was founded by ex-SDS president Lee Webb and operates out of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. Webb is anything but your typical organizer. Immaculately dressed, he has quiet patrician airs and a cautiousness that eschews any exaggeration of the Conference's importance. Earlier, he had been critical of *IN THESE TIMES* for calling the Democratic Agenda Conference a "historic gathering." When I ran into him at the Conference's opening reception, he warned me, "Whatever you write, don't say this was a 'historic gathering'."

But under Webb's leadership the Conference has attracted an immodest collection of local officials, which

*This issue (Vol. 2, No. 36) printed Aug. 2, 1978, for newsstand sales Aug. 2-8, 1978.*

includes old style urban Democrats like Boston's state senator Barney Frank or Hartford city councilman Nicholas Carbone, prairie populists like North Dakota tax commissioner Byron Dorgan and black officials from the South like Mayersville, Miss., mayor Unita Blackwell. The leaders of major community organizations like Massachusetts Fair Share, Illinois' Public Action, or ACORN have regularly attended the annual conferences. And this year there was labor participation from AFSCME and the UAW.

According to Webb, the Conference was specifically intended to gain support for state and local legislative programs that were democratic, decentralized, and redistributive and that challenged corporate priorities. The Conference has championed state banks, the public control of pension funds, tax reforms designed to discourage housing speculation or corporate farming, and solar energy.

In a Friday morning speech, Webb gave a historical justification for the state and local focus. In the Progressive Era, Webb explained, states and cities had been the focus of political innovation, but with Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, the focus shifted to federal policy. Now, according to Webb, it is shifting back. State and local budgets have expanded far more rapidly than the federal budget. And states and cities now take responsibility for economic development and income distribution.

This trend toward local government has been underscored by Watergate and Vietnam, which created new distrust for federal initiative.

### The middle disintegrates.

But unlike past conferences where discussions stayed pretty much on the local legislative level, discussions at the St. Paul meeting tended toward national generalizations. Partly, it was the shadow that Proposition 13, the defeat of Labor Law Reform, and the rise of the so-called new right cast over the proceedings. (See David Moberg's report on page 5.) But partly it was a realization that the participants represented the promise of a new political coalition that could actively combat the right as well as striking out on its own against the corporate enemy.

On Saturday morning, the conference heard speeches by Gar Alperovitz, a Washington economist who has recently been working with Youngstown residents to devise a plan for a community-owned steel plant, and Tom Hayden, the head of California's Campaign for Economic Democracy. For many I talked to, the two speeches marked the high point of the conference.

Both Alperovitz and Hayden spoke of the national and global crisis of capitalism. Alperovitz stressed that the post-World War II period of economic expansion was exceptional, and that American capitalism was returning to a pattern of slower growth broken by "massive, periodic jolts." Traditional postwar politics had been rendered obsolete. As Hayden put it, "the middle is disintegrating."

Both Hayden and Alperovitz cited the fragmentary character of the present response to the crisis, especially on the part of the left. "These technical, momentary alliances are not going to last unless we address the larger issue that is shaping us," Alperovitz warned. He concluded: "I ask you to think not only in terms of local and state issues, but of a nation."

### A national movement needed.

Hayden was more openly critical of the conference's focus. "I've heard all these speeches before," he had complained prior to his own. "We need a national organization. We'd do better sitting down with OPIC (the Ohio Public Interest Campaign), Fair Share, and the other organizations that are doing things."

In his speech, Hayden was no less critical. "I un-

derstand Lee's earlier argument for local and state emphasis," he said, "but I must object if it is a matter of doctrine. Real power can only be built at the level of the community. But we need an organized national movement if we are up against international bandits like Exxon. They're organized on an international basis."

Hayden doubted the value of yearly discussions of whether organizations like Fair Share had or had not succeeded in getting particular local bills passed. "We can't afford that kind of discussion," he said. "It becomes the idle chatter of the privileged left."

But Hayden made no clear proposals toward national unity. "We don't need a convention to form an organization," he said, "but the groups have to think about extending their operations nationally."

He also held open the possibility of a national left challenge to Carter whose administration he described as "collapsing." "In one year," Hayden said, "this conference should take a very close look to see whether we should run somebody against Carter."

### No agreement on strategy.

But while calls for nationwide organization elicited applause, the ingredients for its making did not seem to be there. Private meetings among the New American Movement, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, and among CED and the community organizations reportedly came up with little in the way of national coordination.

Webb was particularly skeptical about Hayden's approach. While he saw the prospect of national single-issue organizations and of national conferences like the St. Paul one, he doubted whether a national left organization could be assembled. "These people can't get together," he said. "There is no agreement yet on strategy and tactics."

One labor leader who attended the conference expressed similar misgivings. He saw the coalition of labor with community organizations, environmentalists, feminists, and minority organizations as only in its first stage and saw little prospect yet of national political movement. "I am worried that we are going through such a period of turnoff and copout about the normal political process," he said.

Neither Webb nor many other people I talked to found much basis for a left-wing challenge to Carter. "There isn't the sentiment for running someone to oppose Carter," Webb said. Webb is therefore resigned to expanding the Conference step by step, adding single-issue conferences on taxes, land, and women to its repertoire and expanding its membership to include more people from the labor movement.

### Political paradox.

The Conference exemplifies the paradox of American politics today. Among the society's opinion makers, whether in business, labor, community organizations, or the media, a sharp ideological cleavage between left and right is taking place. On the left, the possibilities of broad unity around an anti-corporate politics have not been so great since before World War I.

But the sharp cleavage is largely confined to the leadership. As the current tax revolt demonstrates, the majority of Americans are torn between reaction and reform. They are confused, disillusioned, angry, frustrated, and cynical. They cannot be categorized as either right or left.

The people who came to St. Paul recognize this. Seeing themselves with only the most tenuous base, they hesitate to go further either organizationally or ideologically for fear of finding themselves up the creek without a paddle.

But they also recognize that as they hesitate to act, the corporate right wing and its junior partners speed past them.

## IN THESE TIMES

THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

Published 50 times a year: weekly except for the fourth week of July and the fourth week of December by New Majority Publishing Co., Inc. 1509 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60622, (312) 489-4444, TWX: 910-221-5401, Cable: THESE TIMES, Chicago, Illinois.

### EDITORIAL

James Weinstein, *Editor*, M.J. Sklar, *Associate Editor*, Doyle Niemann, *Managing Editor*, John Judis, *Foreign News Editor*, Janet Stevenson, *Cultural Editor*, Dan Marshall, David Moberg, *National Staff*, Diana Johnstone (*Paris*), Mervyn Jones (*London*), Bruce Vandervort (*Geneva*), *Foreign Correspondents*, Elizabeth Price, *Editorial Assistant*, Bill Burr, Keenen Peck, Steve Ross-wurm, *Librarians*.

### ART

Kerry Tremain, *Art Director*, Tom Greensfelder, *Associate Art Director*, Nori Davis, *Assistant Art Director*, Jim Rinnert, *Composition*, Pam Rice, *Camera*, Ken Firestone, *Photographer*.

### BUSINESS

William Sennett, James Weinstein, *Co-publishers*, Nick Rabkin, *General Manager*, Ellen Deirdre Murphy, *Advertising/Business*, William Burr, Jan Czarnik, *Circulation*.

### BUREAUS

SAN FRANCISCO: Chris Dorr, 140 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 626-7897. SOUTHERN: Jon Jacobs, 830 W. Peachtree St., Suite 110, Atlanta, GA 30308 (404) 881-1689. NEW YORK: George Carrano, Jon Fisher, 784 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10025, (212) 865-7638. BOSTON: Sid Blumenthal, 123 Oxford St., Cambridge, MA 02140, (617) 864-8689.

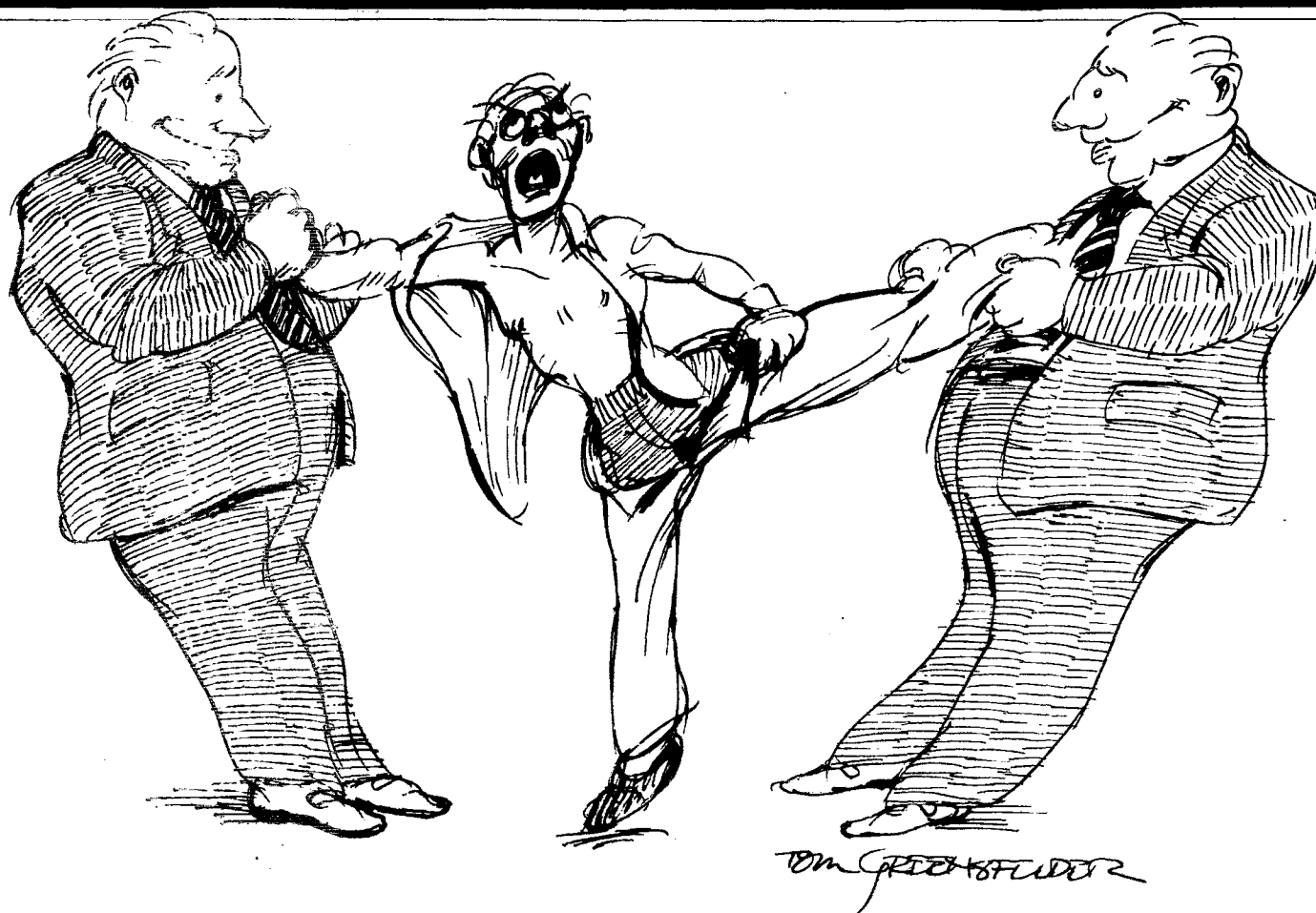
### SPONSORS

Robert Allen, Julian Bond, Noam Chomsky, Barry Commoner, Hugh DeLacy, G. William Domhoff, Douglas Dowd, David Du Bois, Barbara Ehrenreich, Daniel Ellsberg, Frances Putnam Fritchman, Stephen Fritchman, Barbara Garson, Eugene D. Genovese, Emily Gibson, Michael Harrington, Dorothy Healey, David Horowitz, Paul Jacobs (1918-1978), Ann J. Lane, Elinor Langer, Jesse Lemisch, Salvador Luria, Staughton Lynd, Carey McWilliams, Herbert Marcuse, David Montgomery, Carlos Munoz, Harvey O'Connor, Jessie Lloyd O'Connor, Earl Ofari, Ronald Radosh, Jeremy Rifkin, Paul Schrade, Derek Shearer, Warren Susman, E.P. Thompson, Naomi Weinstein, William A. Williams, John Womack Jr.

The entire contents of *IN THESE TIMES* is copyright ©1978 by New Majority Publishing Co., Inc., and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission from the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher does not assume liability for unsolicited manuscripts or material. Manuscripts or material unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. Subscriptions, address changes, and adjustments should be sent to *IN THESE TIMES*, Circulation Department. Subscriptions are \$17.50/year. Advertising rates sent on request. All letters received by *IN THESE TIMES* become the property of the newspaper. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form. Second class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois.



# IN THE NATION



In the aftermath of Prop. 13, business executives and landlords fulfill their promise to bring relief to the voter.

## Renters want their share

By Larry Remer

**S**PURRED ON BY PRE-ELECTION promises from the backers of the Proposition 13 tax reform initiative that a lion's share of the \$1.5 billion tax savings earmarked for California landlords would be passed on to tenants in the form of lower rents, grass roots efforts to implement rent curbs and rent controls have surged to new life in dozens of California cities.

At the root of the upsurge are the unfulfilled expectations of 11 million Californians whose rents have risen 40 percent faster than inflation during the last five years.

Thanks in large measure to the enormous financial resources and political clout of the state's real estate lobby, tenants have been unable to win relief from either state or local government. Rent control measures have been defeated at the polls in Berkeley, Santa Barbara and Santa Monica; a housing industry measure to prohibit local governments from ever enacting such controls passed both houses of the legislature last session, only to be vetoed by Gov. Brown; and the real estate lobby so watered down the legislature's alternative to Prop. 13 last spring that all its progressive features were gutted and it offered no viable alternative.

But that was before the June election and the passage of Prop. 13. Part of the pitch by Howard Jarvis, the main sponsor of that measure, was that landlords would reduce rents and rebate half of last December's rent to their tenants. After the measure passed those promises were forgotten, triggering spontaneous tenant anger and outrage.

Across the state the stories are familiar: Immediately after passage of Prop. 13, the operator of the 4,400-unit Park La Brea apartments sent notices to all tenants assuring them they would participate in the tax savings. Since then, however, the rents in Park La Brea have been increased 12.5 percent across the board. In San Diego the owner of the 36-unit Mission Village apartments sent a letter to his tenants declaring that his investors were suing him for failing to make an adequate profit and, consequently, he was raising rents \$50 to \$100 monthly. In Sherman Oaks tenants in the 54-unit Matilija Apartments were slapped with a 30 percent rent hike and started a rent strike.

"When landlords not only failed to lower

rents, but actually raised them after Prop. 13, tenants realized they were being had," says Cary Lowe, statewide coordinator for the California Housing Action and Information Network (CHAIN), which has been working with dozens of groups to push for local rent freezes and rent control ordinances. "We're now seeing the greatest impetus to tenant organizing in California since the '30s."

In dozens of California cities—including San Diego, San Francisco, Palo Alto, S. El Monte, Pico Rivera, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles—efforts to implement rent freezes and rent controls are either before local city councils or on the November ballot.

### Renters were promised benefits from Prop. 13, and now they want to collect.

Santa Cruz not only has a rent control measure under consideration, it is also looking at an anti-speculation ordinance that would raise apartment transfer tax levies to a point where quick turnover would be discouraged. One of the major upward pressures on rents has been the quick profit from speculators who sell quickly and bring in new owners with large mortgages and notes to pay off.

Rent control forces suffered a setback July 25 when the Los Angeles City Council failed to pass a measure that would have rolled back rents to pre-Prop. 13 levels and have imposed a six month rent freeze. The measure failed on a 7-7 vote. One councilmember who had announced her support for the measure was out of town for the vote, and it is expected that another vote will be held when she returns.

Sponsored by councilman Joel Wachs, a liberal Republican from the San Fernando Valley, the measure would have allowed rents to rise when apartments were vacated—unless the landlord evicted the tenant (as a safeguard against retaliatory evictions). It also included in the definition of rent such items as security deposits, furnishings, appliances and services such as landscaping. Violation of the ordinance would have been a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine and/or jail sentence.

A companion proposal would have created a Landlord-Tenant Mediation Board, funded with federal monies and operated in five L.A. neighborhoods. Though the

board would lack enforcement power, it would provide a forum to air grievances.

Although there was heavy real estate lobbying against the Wachs proposal, which reportedly turned around several votes, there was also considerable grass roots pressure in its favor. The week before passage Wachs reported more than 600 phone calls to his office in support of the measure. Though much of the efforts were spontaneous, several activist groups including CHAIN, the Coalition for Economic Survival (CES) and the Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED) jumped in early to help organize the effort.

CES was organizing tenants before Prop. 13 days. It teaches angry renters how to organize to confront their landlords and, when necessary, to start a rent strike. CHAIN and CED have taken the effort to other parts of the state, hoping to get cities to pass ordinances similar to the L.A. measure and to support state legislation.

Nobody, it seems, is more scared than the landlords. After the announced rent hikes at Park La Brea, CED called Metropolitan Life Insurance in New York, which owns the complex, to announce that they were going to begin a project to organize their tenants. Two days later the rent hikes were rescinded and a rent freeze was announced.

Howard Jarvis, who has never left the employ of the Los Angeles Apartment Owners Association, has announced an industry-wide effort to voluntarily hold back rent hikes in an effort to forestall further legal actions.

After a series of well-publicized meetings with apartment owners and Gov. Brown, Jarvis and Brown last week endorsed a voluntary plan that includes establishment of a 24-hour hot-line to receive and handle tenant complaints. The heads of the apartment owner associations in L.A., San Diego and several other cities have pledged to join in "jawboning" landlords into rolling back rent hikes.

Brown, who is facing reelection in November, is still smarting from the big margin that passed Prop. 13. Hoping to keep the real estate industry as neutral as possible, he has pushed for voluntary mechanisms for keeping rents down. The Gov. has said, however, that if voluntary controls fail he will be forced to support legislation making rent rollbacks mandatory statewide.

Continued on page 4.

## Coalition asks business to return windfall

By Michael Curtin

**T**HE DUST HAS STARTED TO settle in the tracks of the voter stampede that ushered in California's Proposition 13 tax relief measure. As the impact of the referendum becomes more clearly understood a state-wide coalition of community, tenant, labor and political groups appears to be emerging.

While state and local governments have frozen the salaries of public employees, cut social service programs, and sharply reduced abortion funding for poor women, landlords and large corporations have enjoyed tremendous economic windfalls. No authoritative statistics have been released, but estimates of the dollar amounts to be returned to corporations and landlords range from Gov. Jerry Brown's figure of \$2.8 billion to the *Wall Street Journal's* projection of \$4.5 billion.

Two days after the passage of the tax referendum Gov. Jerry Brown argued that "corporate presidents have a moral obligation to invest [their tax savings] in California—to create jobs, to create the possibilities of a continuing boom and buoyant economy."

Reactions by business leaders have been mixed. While Crocker Bank and Wells Fargo Bank have mounted full-scale public relations campaigns to assure Californians that every tax-dollar saved would be reinvested in the state economy (which probably would have happened anyway), others have made no commitment to spending the benefits of Prop. 13 within the state.

Harold E. Berg, the president of Getty Oil commented, "The business of business is business. We have a moral obligation to our stockholders." And Fred Hartley, the head of Union Oil, responded, "Jerry Brown is one of those romanticists. I don't take him too seriously."

Cary Lowe, of the California Housing Action and Information Network (CHAIN), is concerned that "as much as 40 percent of the tax savings may go to out-of-state corporations and individuals." The exodus of \$1-2 billion from the state economy could have serious adverse effects.

In a July 10 press conference in Los Angeles, Tom Hayden, chair of the Campaign for Economic Democracy, announced, "This morning we have cabled the heads of over 30 giant California corporations proposing...they meet with representatives of legitimate consumer and community groups, including CED, to discuss their plans, if any, for redistribution of their Proposition 13 windfall savings into meeting serious human needs."

Citing the action as a "first step in separating the good from the bad in Prop. 13," Hayden proposed that corporations agree to reinvest the savings into areas such as child care, senior citizen services and a non-profit state development corporation.

CED is also asking corporations to supply monthly employment figures by race, sex and in-state jobs, "to allow an accurate determination of whether their investment is indeed creating increased jobs for hard-hit Californians."

Among the corporations CED contacted were Union Oil, ARCO, Levi Strauss, Del Monte, Safeway Stores and the *Los Angeles Times-Mirror*. One week later the response to CED's cable was expectedly evasive.

Corporate executives were "out of town" or "on vacation." While Sambos Restaurants and City National Bank registered definite negative responses, most corporations appeared to be waiting till

Continued on page 4.



## LABOR

# Postal settlement is in serious trouble

By David Moberg

**A** LAST-MINUTE SETTLEMENT of the postal workers contract that traded continuation of protection against layoffs for a modest pay increase was threatened last week by simmering strike sentiment in a few big city locations.

The strongest opposition appeared to be in New York, where the 1970 national postal strike started. Discontent showed up most often in the bulk mail centers, such as the Jersey City facility serving New York City, where three-quarters of the workers participated in a wildcat strike early last week. By the weekend members of the New York Metro local of American Postal Workers Union, one of three involved in the negotiations that ended July 20, were scheduled to have completed a strike vote.

Over 120 workers in the New York and San Francisco areas were fired for striking, increasing anger and willingness to strike among militant union members. Courts ordered the strikers to return.

Although the Carter administration has avoided strong comment on the postal settlement, the results are politically important. Carter's main wielders of the anti-inflation jawbone, Robert Strauss and Barry Bosworth, had strongly plugged for keeping the postal contract wage increase below 5.5 percent a year.

The settlement provides 2 percent more money in the first year, 3 percent in the second and 5 percent in the third in addition to the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The old COLA formula, which recovered about 65 percent of wages lost to inflation, was retained, but a new maximum of \$1,518 in cost-of-living increases over the contract was set. Postal workers now earn an average of just under \$16,000 a year.

Carter may be able to claim that the settlement is a victory in his battle against inflation, since the estimated total increase over the three years is 19.5 percent, roughly 18 percent higher than his guideline. Union representatives denied that Carter kept them in line. They resented the administration's interference in the negotiations with the independent U.S. Postal Service.

Union leaders took a wage increase less than that won by the coal miners and other unions in recent months in order to retain their unusual protection against any layoffs during the contract. "It boiled down to what did we have to do to keep the no-layoff clause," a consultant to the Mailhandlers, a division of the Laborer's union, said. "There were trade-offs. One area was gross dollars."

Despite the no-layoff agreement, instituted in 1970 when the Postal Service was reorganized, roughly 86,000 postal jobs have been lost through attrition since then. Postal managers reportedly hope to get rid of another 100,000 before 1985, when the Postal Service is supposed to end its deficit.

During the past eight years of attrition, the proportion of blacks in the postal work force has dropped from 19 percent to 16 percent, according to John White, vice-president of a small, independent union of black post office employees.

Although a union survey before the contract showed that retention of the no-layoff clause was overwhelmingly the main interest of members, critics of the contract have zeroed in on the pay package.

"Why should we get 19.5 percent over three years?" asked Danny Frank, spokesperson for the New York Metro local. "We want what everyone else got," 30 percent or more over three years.

The proposed contract will increase government payments to the postal workers' pensions, since the accumulated cost-of-living pay was "rolled into" the base pay, but workers' own contributions to the fund will also go up.

Although the union sought changes in



Picketing postal workers, unhappy with the tentative three-year postal contract, demonstrate outside the Postal Services bulk mail center in Jersey City.

## Support for a strike is growing in cities all across the country. The government's response to wildcats hasn't helped.

work rules that would increase worker flexibility and control over assignments and scheduling, there was little progress on this front. The contract only commits management to discuss relief in mandatory overtime, a sore point with the heavily worked bulk mail handlers. The unions also say that the grievance procedure will be speeded up and some improvements have been made in granting leaves.

Mail ballots will soon go out to the 561,000 union members. By mid-August there should be a final tally. But if the New York local votes to strike before then, there is a chance that a walkout

could spread through the urban centers of the postal system. The Postal Service had a contingency plan ready to move essential mail with military personnel if a strike had occurred on July 20, and that presumably could still be put into action.

There seems to be little enthusiasm for the contract among postal workers across the country, but at this point it is doubtful that a majority of union members is sufficiently upset to strike or to vote "no" on the contract. "The consensus is that it's a bad contract, Chicago Postal Workers local president Leo Drake said. "It's not exactly what I wanted."

However, interviews with several dozen workers at the Chicago main post office revealed few strong feelings. Workers were still unfamiliar with the details, having only newspaper reports as a basis for their judgment. Most seemed unhappy with the small pay increase and pleased that the no-layoff clause was retained. Some were concerned that the contract did not end mandatory overtime, permit more flexible work hours or provide for significantly improved safety, especially on jobs that have recently become mechanized.

Support for a strike was growing in New York, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Richmond, Calif., Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Los Angeles and scattered other locals, according to wire service reports. Amnesty for the wildcat strikers appeared as important a demand as improvement of the contract.

If the pieces of opposition begin to fit together into a national action, President Carter may yet regret opening his jawbones against inflation on the postal workers.

## Renters want share

Continued from page 3.

Buoyed by the same kind of popular pressure that is behind the local rent control measures, a legislative proposal has emerged that has a good chance of passage before the election. Authored by Assemblymen Tom Bates (D-Oakland) and Art Torres (D-L.A.), the bill would roll back rents to pre-Prop. 13 levels and mandate that 80 percent of the tax savings from Prop. 13 be passed on to tenants.

The strong drive by the real estate lobby to implement voluntary rent curbs could, if effective, take the wind out of the sails of the tenants' movement. But early indications are that landlords are having a lot of trouble gaining full compliance in the housing industry.

With the election looming, the appearance of rent control initiatives on several dozen local ballots will keep the issue alive.

The question before the voters will be one of "voluntary" versus "mandatory," with tenant activists lining up firmly on

behalf of mandatory regulation. As Theo Wilner, a San Diego CED activist, put it in a recent press conference calling for a rent freeze, "Trusting landlords to regulate themselves is like trusting Dracula to guard the blood bank."

Larry Remer is editor of the San Diego Newsline.

## Return of windfall

Continued from page 3.

a clearer picture emerged of political opinion within the state.

Also, on July 10 a state AFL-CIO convention opened in San Francisco to consider labor's response to the new tax law.

Some union leaders see the time as ripe for moving for the elimination of regressive taxes on the individual—such as sales tax and property tax. In a leadership statement issued by John F. Henning, secretary of the state federation, union leaders announced their intention to push for the reinstatement of a split property tax role with commercial properties being taxed at a higher rate than individuals.

Gov. Brown appeared before the convention seeking its endorsement for his re-election campaign in November. Brown enumerated his record on labor issues, but drew only scattered applause from union representatives conscious of his recent veto of a 2.5 percent pay increase for state workers.

While Brown was able to secure support from the convention, insiders indicate the support is only half-hearted, which may make a difference in November.

Robert Gnaizda, of Public Advocates, who shared the press conference podium with Hayden and other community leaders in L.A., confirmed that "nothing positive will happen unless Gov. Brown intervenes."

Gnaizda indicated the direction activists are moving when he said, "We do not intend to rely on moral commitment, we want signed negotiated agreements."

Thus, while a public interest coalition is beginning to exert pressure on the business community the focal pressure point appears to be the Governor's office in an election year.

Michael Curtin is a free-lance writer in Los Angeles.



## POLITICS

# Progressives confront tax revolt

Whatever the other concerns of the state and local public officials and activists, attention kept coming back to the meaning of the coming tax revolt for them.

By David Moberg

Minnesota's skies were clear as over 500 self-proclaimed "progressives" gathered for the fourth National Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, yet there was one large cloud looming in the distance. It was labeled "Jarvis-Gann" or "Proposition 13," referring to the dramatic property tax slash approved by California voters on June 5.

Whatever the topic on the agenda for the state and local officials, community activists and public interest advocates at the mid-July meeting, their eyes kept turning toward that cloud. Would it just go away? Would it get bigger and cover the whole sky? Was it a threatening storm cloud that could destroy any good in local government policy? Or was it a hopeful cloud, inspiring a populist movement for tax reform that would soak the rich and corporate concentrations of wealth?

California assembly member Tom Bates shared a common pessimistic view: "Proposition 13 is a class issue, a race issue, a selfish issue. Poor people are the ones who got hurt and nobody cared. It is a license for conservatives and right-wingers to go through the budget and get everything they don't like," such as funds for abortion, aid to the blind and disabled and energy conservation, all of which have been cut in California since Proposition 13.

But Tom Hayden, former candidate for the Senate in California and leader of the Campaign for Economic Democracy, which had mixed feelings about Proposition 13 but eventually opposed it, expressed a different and probably dominant theme. "It can't be all bad" when voters reject major political leaders and big business, he said. "Now we're in a state of excitement rather than depression."

CED hopes that tax reform—something quite different from tax relief—will come in the wake of Proposition 13. They support efforts—as yet weak and at times ill-defined—to return landlords' tax savings to renters, to collect delinquent taxes, to entice out-of-state businesses to return their tax bonuses to California and recoup in other ways ground lost to the right wing.

## Gains for left.

Conference executive director Lee Webb argued that progressive politicians—that is, those liberals and socialists seeking a common, non-controversial label that would distinguish them from the Democratic mainstream—have made great gains in recent years in state and local politics. Jarvis-Gann has been overly "hyped" as a harbinger of a new conservatism, he said, and it might even be seen as evidence of the strengthened sense of people's rights and privileges that the left has encouraged over the years.

The brave talk about turning Proposition 13 publicity into a boost for tax reform often seemed as blindly hopeful as a farmer cheering a hurricane for turning his windmill. Although many politicians and organizers are trying to make the best of a new public sensitivity to taxes, one leader of a publicly optimistic citizens action group admitted that privately their organization was "scared shitless."

The validity of the fear—and the hopes—rests partly on the interpretation of the



Byron Dorgan, the popular tax commissioner of North Dakota and one of the leaders of the National Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies, hopes that even the present misguided tax rebellions will force a re-evaluation of our misguided tax system.

message voters were sending through Proposition 13. It could have been a unique California event—extraordinarily fast increases in real estate values and a big state budget surplus exacerbating otherwise common conditions. Roughly 15 states have amassed similar unusually large surpluses in the past two years, most of them west of the Mississippi, but a recent Commerce Department report warns that the bonus will soon disappear even there.

## Attack on the poor.

Speakers vied with each other in reading the California tea leaves. James Farmer, a director of the Coalition of American Public Employees, saw the vote as an attack on the poor and a vote against public services. (A *Los Angeles Times* poll showed voters most willing to cut public programs for the poor, but CAPE polls show that voters, questioned about particular services rather than government in general, do not want most services cut, even those directed to the poor.)

Others saw voters saying that taxes were too high, too regressive or otherwise unfair. Byron Dorgan, the popular tax commissioner from North Dakota, thought that the reaction was less of a "tax revolt" than a reaction against "extravagance and waste" in government. "There's nothing liberal about waste," he argued, urging progressives to be vigilant in the use of public money.

Although there may be hardship for the poor and working class in the process, Dorgan—a likely contender for the U.S. Senate in 1980—thinks that even misguided tax rebellions can force a re-evaluation of a local tax system "that's a mixture of special privilege and interests, not a particularly good system." Likewise, as people dismantle their governments they can then "re-establish" a connection between revenue and services.

"If people see the things that government does—clean the streets, take care of them when they're old and sick, fight fires, take care of them when they're unemployed, when it becomes clear they're dismantling a system that they want, then they have to find out how to pay for it and ask who pays. The working people will come to the conclusion that people should be taxed on their ability to pay," Dorgan says.

There was a common fear that Proposition 13 represented a resurgence of the right wing, stealing "populist" imagery and techniques from the left and using them for an implicit anti-democratic, anti-

government agenda. But Hayden was more concerned that the June vote in California had instead marked the end of the New Deal and confirmation of the confusion and disarray of the "liberal" or "center" forces in American politics.

The fundamental problem—one that has been abandoned to conservatives—was really inflation, economist Gar Alperovitz of the National Center for Economic Alternatives suggested. The inflationary squeeze on all basics of daily life—food, housing, energy and medicine—means that all political initiatives are constrained as people zero in on the easiest target: taxes.

## Reform proposals.

While some pessimists like Massachusetts state Rep. Barney Frank, thought that liberals and the left were in for a sorry time and could only try to blunt the tide of reaction, most of the conference participants hoped to outflank the conservatives with some tax relief or tax reform that would benefit lower income people more than the rich.

There was considerable sentiment in favor of developing an anti-corporate direction to the tax revolt, although others—such as Webb—thought that public policy should aim not simply at better allocation of capital, including harnessing the \$500 billion in workers' pension funds for more rational community development.

Although no tax proposal offered a panacea, there was a growing body of experience to suggest that states and localities could propose progressive alternatives to Jarvis-Gann style proposals or, worse yet, caps on spending. The options are quite varied:

- Oppose tax abatements to business, as the Ohio Public Interest Campaign has done successfully, arguing that such breaks neither hold nor attract jobs to an area.

- Enact "circuit breakers" that limit the maximum percentage of income that can be taken in property tax. (IN THESE TIMES, July 19.)

- Provide, or increase, homestead exemptions (comparable to the standard income tax exemption).

- Cut back exemptions granted to churches, charities, schools, veterans' groups and other tax beneficiaries.

- Enact a severance tax on coal (as North Dakota has done), oil, and other mineral wealth.

- Reclassify property tax into residential

and commercial categories, setting higher assessments for the latter, especially since continuous reassessment tends to diminish the proportion of taxes paid by commercial properties over the years.

- Have the state join the Multi-State Tax Commission or work hard on its own to collect the full amount of taxes due on corporations that operate in many states or nations (most juggle their books to make earnings appear in areas with lower taxes).

- Vigorously enforce all business tax collection: states such as North Dakota, Massachusetts and Ohio have collected millions of dollars in taxes in recent years that would have been lost without diligent pursuit of corporate tax deadbeats. The benefits in collections are usually ten to 15 times the cost of an expanded tax collection office.

- Establish municipal enterprises. Besides their other benefits, they can bring the city additional revenue. (In Florida there is even talk of turning one of their biggest industries, marijuana trafficking, into a state operation.)

- Then there are always plans for shifts away from property tax or sales taxes on food and medicine and toward a more progressive state income tax or to cut federal military spending and transfer those funds to state and local needs.

(Articles—and extensive references—on reforms of taxes, economic development, energy and farm, land and food policy are available in a new reference guide—*Public Policies for the '80s* available from the Conference, 1901 Q St. NW, Washington, DC 20009, for \$9.95.)

But the problem left politicians and activists will nearly always face is that many of their tax revolt constituents are most interested in tax relief, even though they may also favor tax reform. Since any substantial reform will take a chunk of big business profits, every reform will be met by the corporate blackmail of threatened runaway shops and offices and of economic growth stymied by a "bad business climate." Combined with right-wing anti-tax, anti-government initiatives, these political vectors do not point toward tax reform as much as tax cutting.

It becomes clear that there is no easy escape from the Jarvis-Gann cloud. Corporate power will have to be confronted directly, systematically and not only locally but also nationally, as Hayden and other argued, if the progressive potential in the tax rebellion has a chance to surface.



## IN THE WORLD

## AFRICA

# American press fashions new era from whole cloth

By Gerard Colby  
and Charlotte Dennett

NEW YORK

ON JULY 13, AMERICAN NEWS-  
papers headlined a settle-  
ment in Namibia. Accord-  
ing to the American press,  
representatives of five West-  
ern powers—Canada, Britain, France,  
West Germany and the U.S.—assembled  
in neighboring Angola to try to deliver  
Namibia from the clutches of South Af-  
rica's white racism.

The settlement required the approval  
of Namibia's South West African Peo-  
ple's Organization (SWAPO), the black  
revolutionary organization that has been  
fighting occupying white troops of South  
Africa for years and has been recognized  
by the Organization of African Unity  
(OAU) and the United Nations as the sole  
authentic representative of the Namibian  
people. But, according to the press, dip-  
lomacy prevailed, and a peaceful transi-  
tion to independence was promised with-  
in the next year.

The terms of the agreement, although  
obviously fragile, seemed encouraging at  
first reading. A cease fire would mark  
the end of intense fighting between Afri-  
can guerrillas and the occupying white  
forces. As UN forces arrived to monitor  
the cease fire and protect border areas  
with Angola, South African security po-  
lice and troops, now numbering over  
50,000, would begin their withdrawal.  
Most important, free elections would  
guarantee a peaceful transition to black  
majority rule in Namibia. As *Newsweek*  
happily proclaimed, it was the dawn of a  
"new era" for the Namibian people.

But reports from abroad and at UN  
headquarters in New York paint a differ-  
ent picture, one of continued South Af-  
rican determination to hold onto Namibia  
and of SWAPO's reluctance to agree to  
the U.S.-engineered settlement.

## A mysterious settlement.

While American correspondents rejoiced  
with American diplomats over the good  
news, SWAPO organizers in Namibia  
were being rounded up and imprisoned  
by white South African police. The Lon-  
don *Guardian* reported July 16 that SWA-  
PO prisoners were being subjected to  
"the continuous indiscriminate use of tor-  
ture by the South African regime." South  
African bureaucrats were forcibly regis-  
tering voters to ensure a SWAPO defeat  
and a victory for the Turnhalle Alliance,  
a puppet regime installed by South Africa.  
And while arrangements were made for  
the withdrawal of most of the South Af-  
rican troops, the Anglican Church of  
Namibia announced that a "systematic  
increase of troops and massive build-up of  
weapons" had taken place during July.

At the UN, meanwhile, the biggest mys-  
tery of all was the fate of the "settlement."  
No one could find a definitive text. To  
add to the confusion, American papers  
proclaimed SWAPO's acceptance of the  
settlement while the British papers report-  
ed SWAPO's rejection of it. For several  
days, delegates walked about in a daze in  
the corridors of the Secretariat and Gen-  
eral Assembly, confused and immobilized  
over the meaning of the pact.

In reports carried by Reuter's on July  
13 and the *Guardian* on July 15, SWA-

PO's president Sam Nujoma  
made it painstakingly clear that  
his movement could not accept  
a settlement unless Namibia's  
only deep water port, Walvis  
Bay, was returned to Nami-  
bia. The Western accord, he  
implied, did not include the  
return of Walvis Bay; in  
fact, it avoided mention of  
the enclave altogether. On  
that basis alone, SWAPO  
could not accept the ac-  
cord.

## Resolution 385.

But SWAPO had ad-  
ditional objections.  
In order for the liber-  
ation forces to  
feel reasonably sat-  
isfied, the Western  
proposals would have to con-  
form to UN Security Council Resolution  
385, which was passed in 1976. Used as  
a baseline for negotiations, resolution 385  
calls for the withdrawal of South African  
troops, administrative officers and para-  
military security forces from Namibia.  
The resolution also envisages the holding  
of free elections under UN supervision  
and control and release of political pris-  
oners.

Somehow, in the process of negotia-  
tions, Resolution 385 was turned into its  
opposite and emerged as a set of "West-  
ern proposals." Instead of complete  
withdrawal of the South African appar-  
atus from Namibia, the current proposals  
allow for the residual presence of Pre-  
toria's troops and the continuing pres-  
ence of the South African interim govern-  
ment, embodied in the office of "Admin-  
istrator General." Instead of demanding  
a strong executive role for the UN over  
the electoral process, the proposals re-  
duce the UN's role to "monitoring"  
South African activities, including South  
African control over voter registration.

It was clear to SWAPO that South Af-  
rica fully intended to keep Namibia in its  
grip before, during and after the electoral  
process. Seen in this light, SWAPO's re-  
jection of the Western proposals does not  
seem unreasonable. In fact, the liberation  
movement rejected the same set of  
proposals over a year ago. In April 1977  
SWAPO asserted to the UN General As-  
sembly that while it saw negotiations as  
an essential part of the struggle, it had no  
intention of "committing national sui-  
cide."

By surrendering Walvis Bay to Pretoria  
and some 10,000 South African troops,  
SWAPO would be doing just that. The  
Bay is Namibia's only link to the sea.  
Without it, the new state would be politi-  
cally, economically and militarily impo-  
tent.

## A fragile soufflé.

Why, then, did the American press por-  
tray SWAPO's rejection of the accord as  
acceptance? Why did the press and the  
media insist on a Western "agreement"  
when agreement was clearly a long way  
off?

The latest official reports hold that the  
Western negotiators in Angola came up  
with a "fragile soufflé" of a settlement,  
to use the words of chief American nego-  
tiator Donald McHenry, because "good  
food has to be consumed while hot." The

said Sadat, "which does not mean we  
agreed on everything."

Kreisky was further cheered when  
Saddam's former West German Chan-  
cellor Willy Brandt, on behalf of the  
Socialist International, unveiled the  
plan for peace in the Middle East.  
The plan—based on a draft by Peres and  
Eban—called for Israeli withdrawal (not  
necessarily total) from "each sector" of  
occupied Arab territory, including the  
West Bank. It also called for recognition  
of the Palestinians' right to participate in  
determining their own future. In return,  
the plan specified, Israel must be able to  
negotiate secure, new demilitarized bor-  
ders. Neither Sadat nor Peres openly en-  
dorsed the plan, but Peres described it as  
a very realistic document containing  
many positive elements.

Buildup: Peres' meeting caused an  
immediate reaction in Israel, where  
Cabinet minister Yigal Horowitz ac-  
cused the opposition leader of "trying to  
climb to power on Sadat's shoulders."  
But if Sadat incensed Begin, he also  
stunned them completely with his next  
move: an invitation to meet with his  
favorite Israeli official—he liked Weiz-  
man's frankness and undogmatic ap-  
proach—but the Begin government ap-  
peared to want to appear unresponsive, with-  
in an Israeli-made, Westwind  
executive jet. The Israeli Defense Min-  
ister refused to disclose the details of his  
talks with Sadat, but he appeared opti-  
mistic. "I enjoyed it very much," he  
said. "In fact, we both enjoyed it."

While Sadat's sessions with Peres and  
Weizman were a hopeful curtain raiser  
for this week's British conference, a  
tense cease-fire in Lebanon, a mem-  
ber of the Israeli cabinet, cast a men-  
acing shadow. The Israelis were shen-  
ing arms and supplies to defend Chris-  
tian-militant through the Lebanese  
resumed more directly if Syrian units  
forced in and around Beirut. Syrian  
Division for deployment to Lebanon to  
augment the Third Armored  
there. In addition, several Syrian artil-  
lery units—including a battalion of  
240-mm and 100-mm mortars—were  
preparing to move into Lebanon.

Action: If Syria were to reinforce its  
Lebanon contingent, the Israelis might  
Such a confrontation would make it prac-  
tically impossible for Sadat to go ahead  
with any Egyptian-Israeli talks. In Wash-  
ington, State Department officials close  
to Vance called the situation "explo-  
sive." But they noted that Israel and  
Syria had exercised restraint so far—and  
kept their fingers crossed.

RAYMOND CARROLL and WILLIAM E. SCHMIDT in  
CAIRO, MELUJI KUBIK in Jerusalem and LLOYD  
NORMAN in Washington

*Newsweek*, July 24, 1978

West-  
ern negotiators  
wanted to create the im-  
pression that diplomacy had tri-  
umphed over Soviet maneuvers and armed  
struggle. To convey this impression, the  
group framed a communique that delib-  
erately avoided the stickiest issue of the  
negotiations—Walvis Bay—while it duti-  
fully carried an amendment made by SWA-  
PO that declared that "the two delega-  
tions, South Africa and SWAPO, agreed to  
proceed to the Security Council.

In the large halls and corridors of the  
UN, Third World delegates and observers  
have been gathering in small groups and  
exchanging their own views on how the  
West won its settlement.

The picture which emerges diverges  
sharply from the glowing portrayal of  
African cooperation that Ambassador  
McHenry had relayed to the press both  
before and after the Angolan talks. Mc-  
Henry, for instance, repeatedly commended  
Angola for the "crucial role" it played  
in getting SWAPO to accept the Western  
accord. According to McHenry, Angola  
had played this role because it wanted to  
move away from the Soviet sphere and  
closer to the West.

According to reliable sources at the UN,  
however, McHenry's explanation left out  
a key element—that Angola had applied  
pressure on SWAPO because of heavy  
pressure from the U.S. In return for its  
cooperation, Angola was assured that the  
U.S. would no longer fund the UNITA  
guerrilla forces in Angola. If Angola had  
refused, UNITA would have been given  
Western assistance to step up its harass-  
ment and terror campaign.

African representatives at the UN call  
this type of quiet pressure "diplomacy  
through force or fraud." It was this type  
of pressure, many feel, that has not only  
brought about the "western stelement"  
on Namibia, but can also be expected  
to persist, regardless of what emerges  
from the coming Security Council de-  
bate on Namibia scheduled for the end  
of July.

## Another South Vietnam?

South Africa, for its part, has no inten-  
tion of discussing the future of Walvis  
Bay at the Security Council—or so it says  
—even though Namibia is legally a UN  
territory and South Africa has had its

## Namibia: A New Era

There was an air of incongruity in the  
Angolan capital of Luanda last week  
as representatives of the U.S. and former  
colonial powers Great Britain and  
France sipped champagne and posed for  
snaphots with twenty black nationalist  
guerrillas. But the occasion was as histo-  
ric as it was unusual. For after eighteen  
months of hard bargaining, bush fighters  
had finally agreed to end their long war  
with South Africa for control of the sparse  
territory of South West Africa—and they  
could peacefully transform the sparse  
into the black-ruled nation of Namibia by  
the end of this year.

South Africa accepted the Western  
proposal last April, partly because the  
plan permitted 1,500 South African  
troops to remain temporarily in northern  
Namibia. But guerrillas of the Southwest  
Africa People's Organization were more

expected. Even South Africa's Foreign  
Minister Roelof Botha proclaimed a  
new era in southern Africa—something  
which the people of this subcontinent  
would all welcome. "Indeed, some  
Western officials said that the break-  
through on Namibia might warm the  
climate for peace talks in Rhodesia,  
where seventeen more civilians—nearly  
the entire population of a tribal village—  
were murdered by nationalist guerrillas  
last week. "It once appeared that it  
would be impossible to get resolutions to  
such a difficult disagreements without  
war," said a U.S. official who hopes for  
a peaceful domino effect. "But  
we've shown that there's another way."



A South African soldier in Namibia. SWAPO's Nujoma: A breath of peace

cautions. "SWAPO has always been sus-  
picious of whether South Africa could  
intimidate, and heavily influence the  
elections," explained an American nego-  
tiator. "It was a matter of building up  
the Western negotiators." The rebels  
were nudged toward the agreement by  
the "frontline" black nations bordering  
South Africa, especially by Marxist An-  
gola, which wants a peaceful  
southern border with Namibia.  
Joma was finally persuaded  
that a buffer force of 5,000  
United Nations troops stipu-  
lated in the plan would guar-  
antee legitimate elections—  
which Nujoma counts on  
winning.

The Western plan still  
must clear the U.N. Security  
Council, but no snags were

The  
U.S.  
agree-  
ment was  
hailed by  
*Newsweek*  
as the dawn  
of a "new  
era" for the  
Namibian  
people.

mandate to rule the country withdrawn  
by the UN years ago.

Western negotiators are working over-  
time to make the Vorster regime reverse  
its position and salvage their settlement.

Should they succeed, and the Security  
Council endorses the accord, there is still  
no guarantee that the diplomacy of fraud  
and force will end.

Militarily, Namibia's vast, barren ter-  
ritory serves as an important 1,000 mile  
buffer for South Africa against rebel in-  
cursions from Marxist Angola. Econo-  
mically, Namibia is literally owned by  
its southern neighbor and by other for-  
eign interests. Foreign corporations own  
its substantial deposits of copper, cadmi-  
um, lead, tin and zinc. Namibia produces  
some 16 percent of the world's diamonds  
for Harry F. Oppenheimer of South Af-  
rica. And not far from Walvis Bay lies  
Britain's Rossing mine, slated to become  
the non-Communist world's largest pro-  
ducer of uranium.

If independence comes to Namibia  
next year it will be independence on South  
Africa's terms with Western approval.  
Plans to install a puppet regime are al-  
ready proceeding with the aid of back-  
ward tribal leaders and conservative mem-  
bers of the so-called Turnhalle alliance.

If the Western settlement collapses be-  
fore it is imposed there will be more blood-  
shed and increased danger of direct for-  
eign intervention. Either way, the out-  
look for Namibia's 750,000 blacks is not  
good.

If we are to believe Andy Young, the  
situation in Namibia and Rhodesia will  
"certainly go one way or the other before  
the end of the summer." The danger of  
another Vietnam in southern Africa, with  
rigged elections and terror similar to that  
which set up Diem in 1956 as ruler of an  
"independent" South Vietnam, has not  
been reduced, but merely—and tragical-  
ly—observed.

Gerard Colby, author of *DuPont: Be-  
hind the Nylon Curtain*, and Charlotte  
Dennett are both writers in New York  
and members of the newly formed Con-  
cerned Citizens Committee on Africa.



## U.S.S.R.

# Dissidents, Jews, and journalists on trial in Moscow

By Louis Menashe

**I**N ACCORDANCE WITH THE INTERESTS of the people," reads Article 50 of the newly adopted Constitution or Fundamental Law of the Soviet Union, "and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system, citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations."

You don't have to be a constitutional lawyer to notice that the loophole in this "guarantee" is as wide as Red Square. In the Soviet Union, defining "the interests of the people" or what measures up as "the socialist system" is the exclusive privilege of party and state bureaucrats who have arbitrary and unanswerable power to enforce their will. In recent weeks these authorities have given the world a lesson in Soviet constitutional law via trials in Lithuania, the Ukraine and Central Russia.

In the process of handing out harsh penalties to Shcharansky, Slepak, Ginzburg, Piatkus, and Lukanyenko—the last a lesser known dissident and jurist once convicted in 1961 for attempting to form a marxist group advocating Ukrainian self-determination—Soviet authorities also delivered a brazen slap at socialism and basic liberties. And more trials and more slaps are in preparation.

## Contacts with foreigners.

Severing socialism from democracy has been a condition of Soviet rule for decades. In the last 15 years a more relaxed international climate plus a limited de-Stalinization created a certain amount of space for dissent. "Peaceful coexistence" and, later, detente were never understood by Soviet leaders as providing an open warrant for political, religious, or ethnic opposition. But reduced international tension, particularly in Soviet-American relations, brought with it expanded trade, cultural exchanges, a freer flow of information into and out of the USSR, and wider contacts with foreigners.

This has been essential for the dissident movement. The dissidents need information and they need to communicate. The *samizdat* network—the circulation of typed or handwritten books, articles, news chronicles, and manifestoes—is one alternative medium. Another hinges on the foreigner, especially the foreign correspondent. A British citizen, say, gets hold of a dissident manuscript and arranges to have it published in the West, sometimes in Russian. The published book gets back to the USSR and enters the *samizdat* stream. Or an American correspondent files a story about the formation of a "Trade Union for the Defense of Workers," led by a Ukrainian coal miner, a story not likely to appear in the official Soviet media. Western broadcasters—the BBC, the Voice of America, Radio Luxembourg—carry the news and it is heard by millions of Soviet citizens.

Soviet authorities, under the best circumstances, may not like these contacts with foreigners or the way foreign correspondents ply their trade, but the logic of detente enforces toleration. In a general sense, detente implies the lessening of the external menace, a waning of the siege mentality. According to this mentality, repression becomes the normal order of things. A sinister political triangulation, consistently applied in Stalinist times, begins to operate in which the spy, the foreigner, and the dissident are linked up.

## The Soviet Union has used the trial of Shcharansky to take aim at a range of dissident targets.

Article 62 of the Soviet constitution announced sternly, "Betrayal of the Motherland is the gravest of crimes against the people." The Soviet media have always portrayed the dissidents as disloyal, unpatriotic lackeys of Western ways. When such dissidents as the biologist Zhores Medvedev, the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, and the retired General Pyotr Grigorenko are allowed to go abroad only to have their citizenship stripped, one can almost read between the lines of the official decrees the smug chauvinism of the Soviet bureaucrat: "So there. You like the West so much—go and stay there!"

## Press agent for dissidents.

Foreign exile is not a particularly pleasant punishment for a Russian, but it is benevolent by comparison to what threatened Anatoly Shcharansky, charged with the capital offense of treason. The Shcharansky case was at the center of recent de-



Mrs. Natalya Shcharansky during New York press conference right after her husband's sentencing.

velopments in the Soviet dissident movement and in the status of Soviet-American relations. Shcharansky was an important figure in the dissident causes of free expression and free emigration, especially Jewish emigration. Son of a Communist party member and once a Young Communist Leaguer himself, Shcharansky got involved in dissident politics when his request for emigration to Israel was turned down in 1973.

Since then, he has acted as a kind of press agent for the dissidents as a

whole and has been instrumental in solidifying contacts between Jewish and non-Jewish sections of the movement. He was also helpful in gaining momentum for one of the more interesting of recent dissident efforts, the organization of watch committees to monitor Soviet compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki accords of 1975.

However, what provided Soviet authorities with the flimsy grounds for a treason and espionage charge was Shcharan-

*Continued on page 8.*

## Bukharin's son takes case to Italian CP

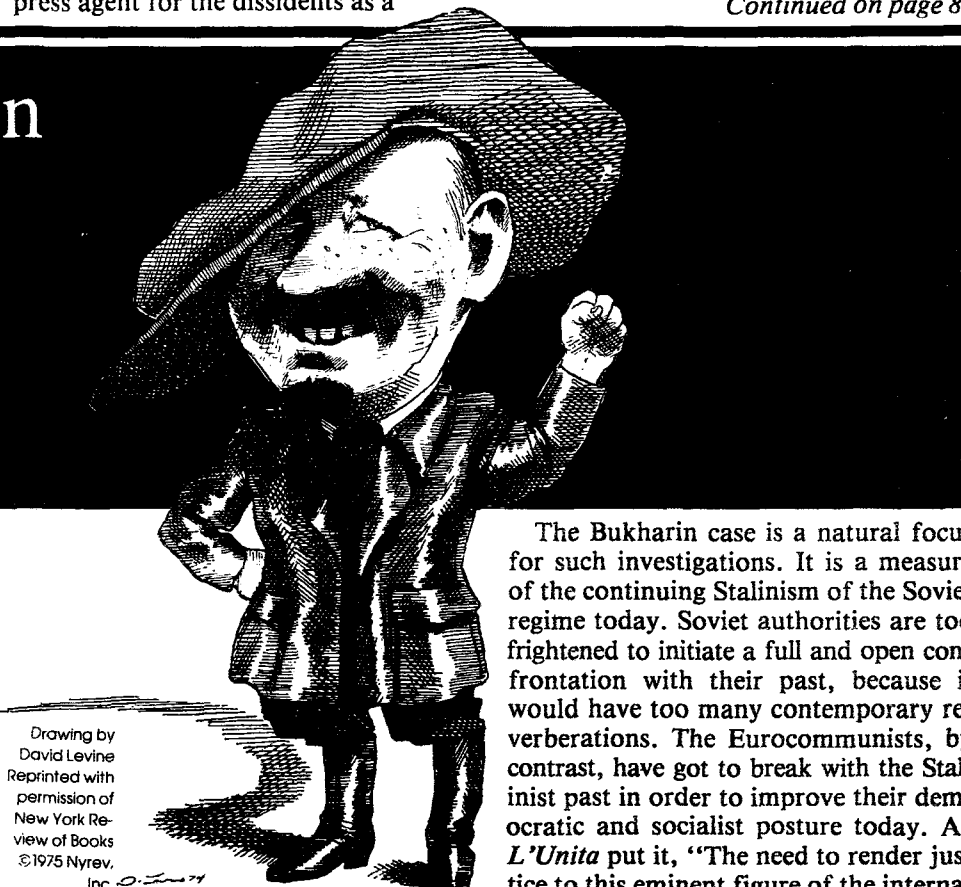
Frustrated at home, Larin Bukharin has taken his case abroad.

In a gesture seeking to involve Western Europe's largest Communist party in a new campaign to rehabilitate the executed Old Bolshevik, Nikolai Bukharin, his son, Yuri Larin, has appealed to Enrico Berlinguer to assist "in whatever form seems to you to be most appropriate." Berlinguer, Secretary General of the Italian Communist party, has not yet replied to the plea sent by Larin from Moscow March 3, 1978, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of Bukharin's execution.

*L'Unita*, the Italian party's daily, however, has run two articles on the Bukharin case sympathetic to his rehabilitation. Moreover, three prominent members of the Italian Communist party, Paolo Spriano, Giuliano Procacci, and Giuseppe Boffa, have added their names to an appeal for Bukharin's rehabilitation circulated among the European Left by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

These appeals to the European left add a new ingredient to a case that Soviet authorities have allowed to simmer for over two decades. Bukharin, once head of the Communist International and one of the most popular of Bolshevik luminaries, was executed after "confessing" to concocted charges of espionage and terrorism at the last of Stalin's show trials in 1938. (IN THESE TIMES, Nov. 16, 1977.)

Taking their cue from Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign and from the subsequent rehabilitation of hundreds of Stalin's victims, including many put on trial with Bukharin, Larin and his mother appealed to the Khrushchev regime and



Drawing by David Levine  
Reprinted with permission of New York Review of Books  
©1975 Nyrev. Inc.

later to Brezhnev personally, to repudiate the original charges and restore Bukharin to membership in the Soviet Party and Academy of Sciences. Last summer a Soviet official told Larin by phone that the pleas were rejected. "This means," wrote Larin to Berlinguer, "that 40 years after the execution of my father we have received an answer, which, in effect, confirms the monstrous charges of Stalin. My approach to the Courts (the Supreme Court of the USSR) has been fruitless: the simple truth is they don't answer me."

Frustrated in his attempts to secure justice for his father via internal legal channels, Larin decided to internationalize the case. His decision to address Berlinguer makes considerable sense, given the position of the Italian party.

Journalists and historians in the Italian party are currently re-examining the historical roots of Stalinism and the harm the Stalin leadership inflicted on both the international communist movement and the development of Soviet socialism.

The Bukharin case is a natural focus for such investigations. It is a measure of the continuing Stalinism of the Soviet regime today. Soviet authorities are too frightened to initiate a full and open confrontation with their past, because it would have too many contemporary reverberations. The Eurocommunists, by contrast, have got to break with the Stalinist past in order to improve their democratic and socialist posture today. As *L'Unita* put it, "The need to render justice to this eminent figure of the international communist movement, as to other victims of the trials of the '30s, is not only a problem of a historical order, but a moral and political necessity."

How Moscow will respond to this intervention by the European left is open to question. Certainly, Soviet authorities will be less piqued by Larin's writing to Berlinguer than if he had appealed to Carter and Brzezinski.

The appeal by the Russell Foundation has also attracted signatories from the British Labour Party, the British Communist Party, the French Socialist party, and the French Communist party. The plea reads, "I appeal to the Soviet Government for the re-opening of the case of N.I. Bukharin, his rehabilitation, and a public explanation of the circumstances which led to his wrongful conviction." Anyone wishing to sign the appeal may address The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd., Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham, England.

—Louis Menashe



## BRITAIN

## Labour and Tories running dead even

By Mervyn Jones

LONDON

**T**HE LATEST BY-ELECTIONS, held on July 13, prove what most shrewd observers expected them to prove: that the Labour Party will need to fight hard to win an October general election, but that victory isn't out of the question.

At Moss Side, a sprawling slice of Manchester—half poor and half more comfortable—Labour was relieved to hold the seat with a reduced majority. The swing to the Tories, regarded statistically, would produce a dead heat between the parties, or perhaps give Margaret Thatcher a wafer-thin majority if it were reproduced on a national scale.

At Penistone, the result was more worrying. It's also a more significant pointer because this electoral district in Yorkshire is a rather representative part of England, with steelworkers, miners, farmers and middle-class commuters among the voters. The steelworkers are numerous enough to make the seat safe for Labour in all but disastrous conditions, but their loyalty may well have been weakened by the plant closures and dismissals now wreaking havoc in their industry. For this reason or others, the Labour vote dropped by 8,000, the Tory vote rose by 2,000, and Labour's majority was slashed from 15,000 in 1974 to 5,000. The swing, if repeated in a general election, would give the Tories a handsome victory.

**Labour will appear cautious.**

Labour's strategists were not compelled to hold the by-elections at all. The new MPs will attend Parliament for only a few weeks before the summer recess, and nobody would have complained if the seats had been left vacant until autumn. The idea, however, was to provide a test of opinion and thus enable Callaghan to decide whether to call an October election or soldier on into 1979.

The Prime Minister, alas, is no longer able to consider these options with Olympian calm. The government's near-defeat during the budget debates was a rude shock. Only by frantic last-minute haggling were the 14 Liberal MPs persuaded to abstain, and the Labour-Liberal pact is now definitely a thing of the past. If the present House of Commons is assembled for another session, it's more than likely that the Liberals will join the Tories to defeat the government in a vote of confidence and thus force an election at a time not of Callaghan's choosing.

It would be far better, most people argue, to hold the election in October and forestall such a nasty experience. In any case, political expectations acquire their own momentum and the prospect of an October election has become an almost universal assumption. The date generally forecast is Oct. 12 and there seems to be nothing against it (except that it is Yom Kippur and a lot of strictly religious Jews won't vote).

The election will be a strange one because the traditional postures of the big parties will be reversed. Labour, in theory the party of reform and social change (or, according to its opponents, of dangerous risk-taking) will appear as the party of caution and stability. The relaxed, avuncular figure of Jim Callaghan contrasts with the more nervous and "pushy" personality of Margaret Thatcher. Callaghan is often compared with Stanley Baldwin, the Tory leader of pre-war years who refused to read political papers on weekends and whose prize pigs appeared to be his major interest. Baldwin fought one election with the slogan: "Safety First" and this has been suggested as fitting for Callaghan. But, as a matter of fact, Baldwin lost that election.

**Thatcher unpopular.**

The "safety first" appeal may suit the present English mood, which can't be called radical or adventurous. The snag



Margaret Thatcher hopes to lead the Tory party to victory over Labour in the upcoming October elections.

is that it doesn't suit the outlook of the Labour activists who will be needed to do the election work. They are not so badly disaffected as in the election of 1970, which Labour lost because of a virtual sit-down strike by its activists, but they're not exactly inspired. In any case, the Labour record isn't one of achievement, nor is the present situation a happy one. Prices are still rising, if at a reduced rate, and unemployment remains at what ministers regularly call an "intolerable" level.

For the Tories, the problem is how to counter suspicions that they are likely to open the way to upheavals and appalling risks—to embark on "radical Right" policies and, in particular, to start a confrontation with the unions that would lead to big strikes and general chaos. Thatcher is leading her party from a doctrinaire, right-wing position, which is ideal for inspiring the activists but risks alienating the middle-of-the-road voter. From now to October, she can be expected to make efforts to project a more conciliatory and statesmanlike (that should be statespersonlike) image.

Except among her committed supporters, Thatcher isn't popular. How far this is because she's the first woman to aspire to the post of Prime Minister, it's hard to say. Anyway, she is regarded as arrogant, sharp and "bitchy"—every schoolboy's picture of the hated teacher. Too much weight, however, shouldn't be attached to this factor. British voters realize that

they aren't electing a President, and the choice of party bulks larger than the leader's personality. Heath, Thatcher's predecessor, was equally unpopular, and this was why Wilson was sure he'd won the 1970 election—but he lost.

**Liberals hold balance.**

The hidden anxiety for Labour is built into our electoral system. The simple-plurality system is suitable where there is a virtually unchallenged two-party situation, as in the U.S., but where there are minor parties of any size it leads to serious distortions. It would be quite possible for Labour to poll as many votes as in 1974, or even more, and nevertheless lose the election.

The reason for this is the collapse of the Liberal vote. It is a highly fluctuating vote, ranging from two million (7 percent) at a low to six million (20 percent) at a high. The two million are people who really believe in Liberal policies. Most of the other people who from time to time vote Liberal are, in normal allegiance, Tories. They vote Liberal when they are passing censure on a Tory government which, in their view, has failed; this is why the Liberal vote touched an all-time high in 1974. But in 1978 they will be passing judgment on a Labour government—and on the pact that, being basically Tory in outlook, they naturally didn't like.

In the six by-elections held this year in England (things were even more disas-

trous in Scotland) the Liberals polled a total of 24,433 votes. In the same districts, they had polled 55,029 votes at the last general election. Opinion polls tell the same story. In the coming general election, the Liberal vote is likely to be much closer to its minimum than its maximum—and the Tories will be the beneficiaries.

Let's glance at just one dicey seat: Rossendale, in Lancashire. The 1974 figures were: Labour 16,156; Tory 15,953; and Liberal 8,693. Labour's plurality was 203.

You don't need a computer to see that if the Liberal vote drops to around 5,000 the Tories will win Rossendale, even if the Labour vote is intact. Although this is an extreme case, the same general picture is valid in 27 constituencies. That would be quite enough to give Thatcher a majority in Parliament. One has to add that the Scottish National Party is losing support in the same way as the Liberals—and there, too, the Tories stand to benefit.

At this writing, the only thing that can be said with certainty about the coming election is that the outcome will depend on the campaign. It isn't lost in advance for Labour, but it is yet to be won. One effective broadcast by Callaghan, or one frightening broadcast by Thatcher, could turn the scale. Money may be decisive. The readiness of party activists for hard and devoted work may be more decisive still. I'm expecting, as the Duke of Wellington said of Waterloo, a damned close-run thing.

## Dissidents stand trial in Moscow

*Continued from page 7.*

sky's association with *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Robert Toth, who had been expelled last year for soliciting "state secrets." (Some American State Department officials admitted privately that Shcharansky may have inadvertently provided Toth with what in Soviet eyes is sensitive information.)

**Detente deteriorates.**

By striking at Shcharansky, Soviet authorities seemed to be hitting several targets with one blow. Human rights dissidents, Jewish "refusenik" activists, aggressive foreign correspondents, fighters for the rights of national minorities were all symbolically in the dock with Shcharansky. They were also trying to shortcircuit the line connecting journalists and dissidents that is so important to the human rights campaign. Toth's expulsion was preceded by the ouster of the Associated Press'

George Krinsky. More recently, *New York Times* and *Baltimore Sun* correspondents have been hauled into court for allegedly defaming Soviet television broadcasters. How Soviet authorities intend to intimidate Eurocommunist journalists who have also given wide publicity to dissidents and repression is a fascinating question.

But perhaps there was another aspect to the busy season in political trials in the USSR. The recent wave of arrests, trials, expulsions, and internal exiles have emerged against a background of deteriorating relations between Moscow and Washington.

The Carter administration's early and openly announced support for Soviet human rights activists may not have been intended as a deliberate attempt to sabotage detente, but it certainly had the effect of angering Soviet leaders. Since then, snags in SALT, American fulminations

about Soviet involvement in Africa, a decline in trade, and Washington's dalliance with Peking have brought detente to an impasse.

This is not a situation likely to help dissidents and human rights in the USSR. Nor are moralistic postures by the White House going to assist anyone in the USSR except those who want to get tough with the Americans and the dissidents. The best Carter and Brzezinski can do for Soviet dissidents is to keep their mouths shut.

But others should speak out. As the English *New Statesman* put it, "The present Carter strategy probably has very little life left in it—but socialists will have to carry on the battle whoever is in the White House....the real test will come when a new generation of opposition arises.... The left must be ready to throw them a line."

Louis Menashe writes regularly on Soviet affairs for *IN THESE TIMES*.



# THE LEFT HAND OF GOD

Is there a special message for us?



Richard Stromberg

## TRUE RELIGION IS ALWAYS DANGEROUS & SUBVERSIVE

**Charles S. Slap** **K**ARL MARX denounced religion as the "opiate of the masses." ¶ The belief in a universal father, "who art in heaven," Sigmund Freud considered an infantilism, a group neurosis. ¶ Last year, the editor of a journal wrote to me, "I'm happy you are interested in writing for us on religion. ...Though I have left it behind me, I know the importance of my religious upbringing in shaping my sense of right and wrong, as well as other aspects of my basic personality."

"I have left it behind me." In agreement with Marx and Freud, many of the most politically active elements of society today view religion as a crutch, a soporific, an infantilism. The people active in the major reform movements of our time are not, in general, the people you find in America's churches on Sunday morning.

The "progressive" attitude towards religion is, if not cynicism, a reduction of religion to ethics. Religion, like the flag, has been abandoned by the left. Religion and the flag have been co-opted by the political right for purposes that only can be called idolatrous.

I have considerable sympathy with the irreligion of the left. For what is at the base of irreligion is often a protest against "trivial or perverted religion," the religion of White House prayer meetings, Rotary Club prayers; the religion of piety and government sanctifying each other, Billy Graham and Richard Nixon.

Yet irreligion is also the Achilles' heel of the left, a weakness of which it is not even aware, a wound that is hurting, individually and corporately.

For by dismissing the religious endeavor, by reducing religion to the observation of moral precepts, we leave ourselves without a grounding, without a rootedness in the ultimate sources of life.

Eric Fromm tells us that our religion

is what gives us a frame of orientation for life and an object of devotion, some ultimate concern, some basic value. Without an examined frame of orientation, without a recognized ultimate concern—without religion—our ethical precepts fail to achieve depth, we find ourselves entwined in a hodgepodge of activities and causes that are not grounded in any basic affirmation.

To live life without a religion of our own is to miss life's vertical transcendental power. It is to rush from meeting to meeting with no sense of priority, no way of telling what is truly important.

There is a tragic irony here. For by discounting religion, by considering it something left behind, we also cripple the social commitments that we seek to substitute for religion.

Religion can be evil, as in the Inquisitions and the Crusades, as in the Irish terrorism. Religion can be neurotic.

But religion can also be magnificent, inspiring people to place their lives and fortunes in the cause of justice and compassion.

Religious commitment can be good or bad, but it is always powerful. When any cause finally makes the connection with a religious rooting, that cause is almost unstoppable.

The failure to root itself in religion, has been the quicksand of many progressive causes. Without religion there is no passion, no grounding in the ultimate

source of power. On the basis of reasoning alone, we reach conclusions, on the basis of a religious faith, we make decisions.

True religion is always a subversive activity. True religion goes beyond flag and country, beyond church and dogma, beyond law. This was the central message of Jesus—religion seeks always the sustaining and transforming source of life.

Moses, Jesus, Martin Luther King, Gandhi—each one was a law breaker, each a subversive, each dared to judge their society, each took upon himself the role of servant. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. ...He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth...." (Isaiah 42.)

This is the paradox of religion. While it may indeed serve as the opiate of the masses, religion can also be the most subversive of forces, serving as the strength of oppressed people and the foundation of their liberation.

This self-perception of the religious community as suffering servant, as the transforming community, gave form to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. As was brought out in a recent issue on religion of the journal *Southern Exposure*, the black church served as the nurturing institution for the new mass movement. "Its structures were used by meetings, freedom schools, voter registration drives and community centers. Its members were often the foundation upon which local movements were built and sustained. Since the time black people were brought to this country under slavery, the church has been the one institution they have controlled and used as a tool for their own liberation."

The black churches translated into action the belief that suffering itself may redeem the larger society. The black churches were never a passive imitation of the white churches. On the contrary, they were—and are today—an active force that stimulated their people to emancipation.

The American Indians also have found in their religion a defense against oppression as well as an escape from it. As Vittorio Lanternari informs us in *The Religions of the Oppressed*, "In the

struggle of the American Indians against the white invaders, religion played a far more significant role than is commonly believed. ...Frequently, it was a religious drive which inspired and sustained their desperate efforts to rise up against the foreigners who had taken their land. One of their most eminent chiefs, Sitting Bull, acquired fame and authority among his own people less as a military and political leader than as the apostle and prophet of the Ghost Dance, a...religious movement which gave Indians the courage and strength to carry on the struggle for independence. ...The Ghost Dance promised redemption and liberation at a time when the Indians were ready for rebellion, and provided the motivating force for uprisings such as that of the Sioux...."

Today in California religion provides the drive behind Cesar Chavez's effort to emancipate his people. A true suffering servant, with the active support of the Catholic Church, he has taken upon himself the yoke of the migrant farm worker.

Many churches burst into religious flame during the Vietnam War. With true religious passion, they resisted an imperialistic war. Many churches became at least symbolic sanctuaries of resistance.

The test of a religion is how subversive it is. Where does its ultimate loyalty lie—with the powers and establishments of society or with the transforming power of love and justice. A subversive religion affirms the moral obligation to direct one's efforts towards the establishment of a just and loving community.

"The 'holy' thing in life is the participation in those processes that give body and form to universal justice," the theologian James Luther Adams reminds us. "A purely spiritual religion is a purely spurious religion; it is one that exempts its believer from surrender to the sustaining, transforming reality that demands the community of justice and love. This sham spirituality, far more than materialism, is the great enemy of religion."

A subversive religion unabashedly seeks power, seeks incarnation in history, tries to shape history towards justice, Adams reminds us. "Any other faith is thoroughly undependable; it is also, in the end, impotent. It is not a

Continued on next page.



faith that molds history. It is a faith that enables history to crush humanity." It is the opiate.

A subversive religion, Adams concludes, believes that "the resources (divine and human) that are available for the achievement of meaningful change justify an attitude of ultimate optimism. This view does not necessarily involve immediate optimism. In our century

we have seen the rebarbarization of the mass man, we have witnessed a widespread dissolution of values, and we have viewed the appearance of great collective demonries. Progress is now seen not to take place through inheritance; each generation must anew win insight into the ambiguous nature of human existence and must give new relevance to moral and spiritual values. A


realistic appraisal of our foibles and a life of continuing humility and repentance is all that will do, for there are ever-present forces in us working for perversion and destruction."

"History is a struggle in dead earnest between justice and injustice..." says Adams. "Anyone who does not enter into that struggle with the affirmation of love and beauty misses the mark and

thwarts creation as well as self-creation."

A subversive religion requires a subversive God. A creative force worthy of our devotion requires not praise, but care for the creation. Whatever caring, loving spirit may exist in the universe, if it is to act at all in human affairs, it must be through those of us who are willing to serve as its representatives. ■

## THE CHURCH ESCAPES THE MIDDLE-CLASS CAPTIVITY + + +

**Lee Cormie**  **O**N SEPTEMBER 19, 1977, the Lykes Corporation, a New Orleans-based shipping and steel conglomerate, announced it would close its Campbell works near Youngstown, Ohio. The Lykes Corporation had acquired Youngstown Sheet and Tube eight years before and milked it of its assets in order to acquire cash for corporate growth in other fields. ¶ What was just another corporate decision for Lykes had the potential for disaster for the people of Youngstown. Five thousand would be laid off by the closing of the steel works. And it is estimated that at least another 10,000 jobs in the area depend directly on revenue associated with steel production.

While plant closings are not new, the Youngstown case is different. It may yet become a symbol of hope. An Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley, under the leadership of Bishop James W. Malone of the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown and Bishop John H. Burt of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, has been formed, and has already undertaken several innovative initiatives. In collaboration with the National Center for Economic Alternatives in Washington, they are studying the feasibility of a community/worker takeover of the Campbell works, and have begun the process of securing government and private support for it. They have also pushed for a national commitment that would keep basic steel in communities where steelworkers live, and have used the Youngstown example to focus attention on the plight of communities faced with runaway shops.

A pastoral letter has been drafted outlining the moral and ethical issues involved in the Lykes' decision to abandon Youngstown. It points to the emphasis in the Judeo-Christian scriptures on God's concern with the liberation of his people. Our God, it says, is a God of justice. It criticizes the corporation's decision and the way it was made, and points to the basic human right to useful employment, decent wages and participation in economic decision-making.

If, in a capitalist society, subversion can be defined in terms of undermining the notion of private ownership and control of the means of production, then the Ecumenical Coalition is certainly subversive.

But it is more than that, for it is also promoting concrete efforts to develop alternatives that may become models for other communities. It is no wonder that one corporate executive, on hearing of the efforts of the coalition, exclaimed: "That would be a disaster!"

Not all Christians are in the forefront of progressive change. Some, like those involved in the grass roots opposition to the ERA and those supporting the

rightwing Wanderer Forum, argue that their religion dictates support for conservative and sometimes reactionary causes. Or, what is in effect the same thing, they argue that their faith has nothing whatsoever to do with economics and politics.

A still greater number of Christians can be identified with neither the right nor the left. Like most Americans they have not yet taken a visible stand on the great economic, political and moral issues confronting humanity.

Probably the single most important feature of the major Christian denominations within the U.S. today is their middle class character.

Historically, it is true, the class distribution of white Protestants has been almost as diverse as the class structure itself (although they have always been overrepresented toward the top of the class structure). But large numbers of Protestants who were not initially in

### As the middle-class view that's dominated the church recently cracks up, new perspectives open up

the upper or middle classes were well situated to move upward during the various stages of American economic expansion.

For a long time the Catholic church was identified with those at the bottom, with the waves of poor immigrants throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, but many in these groups too moved upward as the economy expanded.

In recent history, then, the main-line churches, their symbols and rituals, their theological perspectives and institutional forms, have all been shaped by a certain

optimism about the possibility, for oneself or at least for one's children, of affluence and prosperity. The perceptions of the leadership of these churches especially has been shaped by professional middle class experiences and perspectives.

In this context, theology has been abstracted from historical struggles for justice, and focused on the existential issues confronting individuals: death and birth, personal morality, and so on.

Even where the churches have promoted concern for issues of social justice, like Catholic support for early labor union struggles, their policies have tended to promote the view that reform rather than radical structural change would solve the problems.

Blacks have always found it harder to be optimistic about their chances in U.S. society and their churches have historically been important centers of resistance and subversion, as well as of refuge and recuperation from the daily struggles for survival. In this century, though, with the clear emergence of a black middle class, many blacks are beginning to complain that many of their churches too have become imbued with the optimism of the myth of upward mobility that will solve all problems of economic injustice and material want.

The economic and social changes that have promoted upward mobility for some have also been sources of strain and tension for others. Fundamentalists, revivalists, born-again charismatic movements, inside and out of the main-line churches, have been reactions to these changes. In the midst of the social and personal alienation that accompanies social transformations—like the immigration from rural to urban areas in the middle of this century—these movements have reflected an often romanticized longing for the past, its values, life-styles and politics.

Clearly these movements tap sources of resentment and anger that could also fuel progressive social change. Yet their faith generally promises individual salvation and a better society simply on the basis of individual conversion. When they have not avoided explicitly political activity, these groups have all too often been drawn towards the right wing.

The theological and institutional perspectives of the major denominations, linked to the myth of upward mobility, have been experienced as meaningful within the context of the real—if at times slight—upward mobility of many Christians, especially for those in leadership positions within the churches. The 1970s, however, has been a decade of "austerity" and diminishing aspirations. Not surprising it is also a time of profound crisis in values and meaning—as well as politics and economics. This conflict is evident within the churches in the proliferation of diverse theological positions, confusion about mission and about the means and ends of theological education, and in a serious questioning of the relationship of the church to society.

Contemporary Christians, particularly those on the left, confront a variety of issues: What is their moral imperative to identify with the poor and oppressed in their struggles for liberation as evidence of their faith? And, once that is accepted, what are the sources of poverty and oppression? At the same time, so that

this identification will not be purely passive, at most helping a few individuals enjoy better lives amidst a sea of poverty, what are the kinds of social change necessary to create a better society, what are the specific organizational steps that have to be taken now to begin that process?

Given the threatened and changing social bases of the churches these issues have and will continue to emerge in a variety of concrete ways.

Already, for example, there is a deep sense of crisis in many inner city churches, and a growing awareness of the need to become politically involved. In a number of cities like Buffalo, Milwaukee and San Antonio, there are massive, church-based community organizing projects underway with the goal of empowering people to maintain and improve their own local communities.

These ecumenically based projects have manifested a willingness to confront local power structures in the form of a corrupt city hall or a redlining bank. They reflect an important step in the politicization of the Christian faith. Whether these kinds of responses ultimately manifest a belief in reform within the system or in subversion and radical social change, of course, remains to be seen.

Groups have also emerged in response to specific problems. The Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley is one example. Often they are pushed to the left, towards a more systemic critique, after they begin to grapple with the specifics of their problem and the economic and political forces at work.

A few groups, like ACTS, the U.S. branch of the international Christians for Socialism movement, inspired by Latin American liberation theology, self-consciously understand themselves in ideological terms.

The ecumenically oriented ACTS chapters, now numbering seven, for instance, seek to interpret their faith and their understanding of the role of the church from the perspective of the needs of the oppressed. In understanding both the sources of current injustice and strategies for change they look to Marxist analyses and the experiences of Marxist parties and movements. The goal of Christians for Socialism generally and of ACTS too is not to start a new Christian political movement or party, but, while working within existing parties or organizations, to revitalize the faith of Christians and the churches' policies.

Other groups are also raising questions of analysis and strategy. A revitalized Methodist Federation for Social Action is specifically looking at Marxist analyses as a way of understanding the crises in the U.S. and on a global scale today.

The Church and Society network in the Episcopal Church, publisher of the journal *Witness*, is another example of Christians seeking a clearer analysis and strategy. In addition, the Episcopal Coalition of Urban Bishops has just completed a series of urban hearings seeking input into decision-making concerning the church's role in the cities; and the coalition is simultaneously sponsoring a series of institutes, in collaboration with the Institute for Policy Studies, on the global dimensions of the urban crisis.

Continued on page 12.





*Religion can be the most subversive of forces, serving as the strength of oppressed people and the foundation of their liberation. Martin Luther King Jr.'s perception of the religious community as the suffering servant of humanity gave substance to the non-violent tactics of the civil rights movement (above). Likewise, the church and the unity of faith has supported and strengthened efforts to organize farmworkers (right). Religious communities, like Glide Memorial Church (below), were heavily involved in the activism of the '60s. Photos by Bob Fitch*





In August 1975 the Black Theology Project sponsored a conference on the Black Church and Black Community in Atlanta attended by some 200 clergy and lay leaders. The participants at this working consultation issued a message at the end of their time together that spoke of the "moral, material and spiritual" crisis that confronts blacks today. And they located the "root problem" in "capitalism, nurtured by human wilfulness, and served by the exploitation of sexism and racism."

The journal *Sojourners* is significant as the vehicle for raising questions of economic and political analysis for a growing circle of evangelical Christians. The list could go on.

Whatever happens within these different groups will depend on the wider political climate. The struggle within the churches reflects that in the larger society. An example from a few years ago

## The movements inside the church mirror those in the larger society

will illustrate this situation clearly:

In 1974, under the title "Theology in the Americas," a project was launched to bring together groups of Christian activists, church leaders, and theologians from North American and Latin America, along with some social scientists, to examine more closely the sources of oppression and to share reflections on the appropriate Christian response to

these problems. In preparation for a conference in Detroit in August 1975, 60 reflection groups were formed around the country to reflect on what their own experience had taught them concerning these issues.

At the conference itself, three strong responses to oppression emerged: among some white North Americans and the Latin Americans a powerful denunciation of class oppression and imperialism; among blacks a denunciation of racism; among women a denunciation of sexism. Inevitably, challenges arose, each group accusing the others of overlooking the special forms of oppression characteristic of its experience. The conference did not see a resolution of these differences.

Each of the interest groups that emerged at the conference (blacks, women, labor, white "middle class," Hispanics, Asian Americans, as well as professionals within the churches) was mandated

to seek to understand the interrelated nature of sexism, racism and class oppression in the context of international structures of domination and dependence. These groups are continuing to work under the umbrella of Theology in the Americas, seeking to promote structural social change and a return within the churches to an original identification with the oppressed in their struggles for justice.

Clearly, though, the issues are bigger than the churches; they are issues confronting all groups seeking justice and a better way of life for all.

In the midst of the battles for radical social change there is also a battle for the human soul, for human values and meaning and a new vision of human possibilities. This battle is already going on within the churches. How that battle is waged and resolved may have a lot to say about the future of social change in this country.

# CLAUDE WILLIAMS: MERGING RELIGION & ACTIVISM

**Bill Troy** IN THE EARLY 1930s there appeared in the Deep South one of the most significant mass movements in the history of that region. Poor black and white farmers who had labored for years under various "sharecropping" arrangements came together during the Depression to form the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (STFU). Squeezed by declining cotton prices, absentee land ownership and a New Deal farm support policy that put free money into the hands of plantation owners, thousands of farm workers dropped their hoes and marched—in the face of organized terror—to demand a better day for themselves and their families. At its height the STFU counted some 20,000 members.

The movement raised some remarkable people into positions of leadership. One of the most unlikely, yet gifted, of them is still around. Claude Williams is a white preacher. He's 83 years old and lives in a trailer outside Birmingham, Ala.; where the force of his mind and personality are still enjoyed by a host of political friends dating from STFU days to the present.

When the sharecropper movement began in 1934 Claude Williams was pastoring a small Presbyterian mission church in the mining town of Paris, Ark. He lived there with Joyce King Williams and their two children.

Claude and Joyce had moved to Paris after serving an established Presbyterian church in Tennessee for seven years. During that time the social gospel and other forms of progressive thought began to penetrate the South, gradually helping the Williams to clarify their own growing recognition of the poverty and racial injustice around them. By the time they left for Paris, the fundamentalist faith of their upbringing had changed so radically that the conventional church could never hold them again.

In Paris they created a whirlwind. The town was desperately poor and the little church on the brink of extinction. Soon both were buzzing over the preacher who opened a pool hall in the church, encouraged the young people to read everything from the Bible to socialist theory to magazines on nudism, and preached sermons on the compatibility of the Bible and evolution.

Claude quickly became a friend and

champion to coal miners in the area trying to reorganize a union. While he was traveling the district speaking for the union, Joyce was keeping open house for miners, young people, children and anybody who needed a roof for the night or a bite to eat.

After four years the squires and ladies who ran the church got rid of the preacher for neglect of his duties. But by then the Williams had come into contact with the considerable political ferment taking place throughout Arkansas.

Both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party were active in the state. There were militant councils of the unemployed in Fort Smith and Little Rock. Exciting things were happening at Commonwealth College, Arkansas' famous labor school. And, first and foremost, there was the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

In Claude Williams the STFU found one of its most effective organizers. This was due in part to the warmth and forcefulness of Claude's energetic personality. Raised in a sharecropper home in west Tennessee, he understood the people he was working with and was accepted by them. Much of the work required careful underground organization, meetings held by pre-arranged signal under cover of night. Local people understood that Claude was willing to accept the same dangers to which they were exposed.

There have been few radical movements in America that more effectively joined the efforts of poor blacks and poor whites. To Claude this dimension of STFU activity was a matter of unswerving principle. Many of the union's

most remarkable black leaders were recruited through his efforts. He carried out this conviction in a common sense way, devoid of the romanticism that afflicted so many activists from outside the region.

Neither did this commitment hamper his effectiveness with poor whites, whom he understood even better, having been one himself. One of the union's most remarkable recruits was a white sharecropper preacher named A.L. Campbell, who attended one of Claude's organizing meetings as a spy for the Ku Klux Klan. It was precisely Claude's forceful and reasonable attack upon "Ku Kluxism," as distinguished from individuals who belonged to the Klan, that brought Campbell over to the union's side.

But Claude's most distinctive contribution to the union lay in his religious approach to organizing. He had started his career as a fundamentalist Christian, then gone through successive changes influenced by modern Biblical interpretation, contemporary science, the social gospel and finally Marxism. At each step of the way, he felt impelled to reinterpret the Bible.

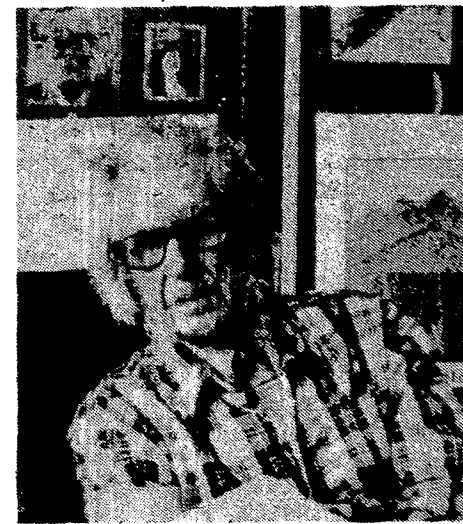
Sometime in the '30s, Claude read Lenin's *State and Revolution*. Finding it "the most revealing commentary on the Bible I had ever seen," he went back to "the Book" and found there the story of an international revolutionary people's movement. From Moses calling the first strike in Egypt to the Son of Man opposing the Roman Empire and its lackeys, the story was all of a piece.

At the same time Claude knew from his own experience the pervasiveness of religion among poor rural southerners. He knew the Bible was their primary guide for living, the church their major institution. Union organizing meetings often took place in churches and Claude soon found that unless the preacher went along with the union message, "we might as well go home."

Determining to use the people's religious framework to advantage, he learned to make the case for the union in terms of the "positive content of the gospel."

For seven years, beginning in 1940, he labored at this task through his own organization, the People's Institute of Applied Religion. First on behalf of the STFU and developing CIO activities in the South, later in the defense plants of wartime Detroit, the People's Institute formalized this religious approach to union organizing into a remarkable methodology.

Three to ten-day institutes would gather together up to 50 cotton field or defense plant working preachers and Sunday school teachers, black and white, male and female. They worked day and night, each session beginning with prayer, scripture and song.



Bill Troy

## The Bible demands activism

The first day all were encouraged to share the most pressing problems their communities faced—food, shelter, wages, education, working conditions. Then an institute leader made a presentation based on these problems, using one of the unique orientation charts Claude devised in 1940.

The charts, by means of simple pictures and diagrams—always buttressed with Bible references—traced the story of "people's religion" and related that story to the concrete social and economic problems "of this world". The charts were presented sermon style, the kind of talks folks were used to hearing from someone "who had a conviction to impart."

Later sessions used mimeographed worksheets to analyze the political causes of people's suffering and to suggest collective remedies. Still others focused on concrete skills in union organizing. Throughout the meetings they sang, transforming a number of traditional hymns into some of today's best known freedom songs.

Among the interesting things to be learned from these unique assemblies, perhaps the most striking is the importance of meeting people on their own terms, in light of the positive, progressive aspects of their own view of the world.

Claude and his co-workers had a definite message to impart—the necessity for collective class struggle—but they did it by building on language, symbols and experience that people understood. The result was an intriguing experiment in workers' education based firmly in the historical reality of the Deep South. ■ Bill Troy is a Methodist minister associated with the Southern Appalachian Ministry in Higher Education, based in Knoxville, Tenn.



# ERNESTO CARDENAL: REFLECTION TO ACTION

**Dow Kirkpatrick** WITH HIS trimmed white beard and shell-rimmed glasses, the slim, middle-aged man in dark slacks and open-collared shirt looks more like a poet than a Catholic monk or revolutionary. But Father Ernesto Cardenal of Nicaragua is all three: writer, priest and member of the insurgent Sandinista National Liberation Front there. ¶ The 52-year-old poet-priest, who began his religious life in a Kentucky Trappist monastery, sees no contradiction between religion and revolution. In fact, Cardenal says that contemplating the teach-

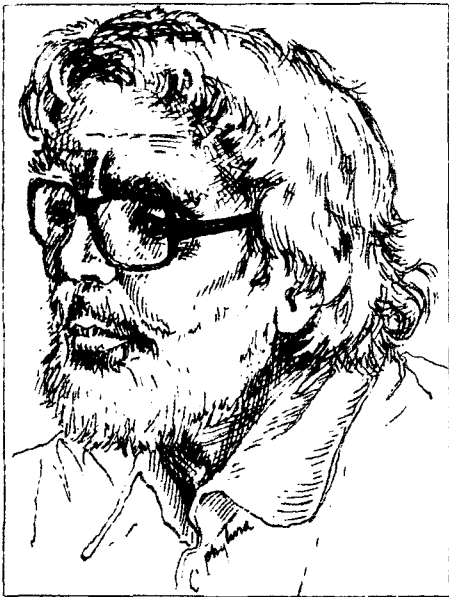
ings of the Bible led him and many of his followers to Christian resistance against the regime of Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza.

Cardenal celebrated Christmas mass last year as an exile in Costa Rica together with many of the Nicaraguan members of the Christian community he founded on the remote Solentiname archipelago of Lake Nicaragua. They fled their homeland when Somoza's troops occupied Solentiname after a series of Sandinista attacks on government installations in October.

In a borrowed home on the outskirts of San Jose, the political refugees talked about their community and their country.

"Solentiname is very beautiful. Ernesto [Cardenal] came to live among our poverty. That was the first miracle," says Olivia Silva de Guevara, mother of ten children. Six of her sons and daughters took part in the Sandinista raid on the San Carlos military barracks on Oct. 13.

"The second miracle is he brought us the true gospel with love. In Nicaragua the majority of the people are poor, abandoned. Through the gospel a more



dignified life has come to us," Olivia says.

We sat around the table, Olivia and her family. Donaldo was missing—the only one captured. Alejandro, the leader of the attack, and his wife of a few days were there. To make it a eucharist, I had brought bread, cheese and a bottle

of wine. Gloria fried some bananas.

"This is a union of Christians," says Olivia, examining the label on the Spanish wine bottle. "We understand when we share bread and wine that everything is to be shared among all people equally. We don't have the right to give some people less and some more. Jesus divided equally among his disciples."

Cardenal doesn't deny that he is a revolutionary. He says that it is an "honor" to be a Sandinista, named after Augusto Sandino, a peasant leader who fought American intervention in Nicaragua in the 1920s.

"It's my duty as an artist and a priest to belong to this [revolutionary] movement. The poet cannot be a stranger to the people's struggle, much less the priest," he said in an interview.

That Cardenal is a priest-revolutionary is not startlingly new in Latin America. The history of clergy active in guerilla movements goes back to Father Miguel Hidaigo, who launched the Mexican war of independence in 1810 and became a national hero.

But the Nicaraguan priest is the first in modern times to do so with at least the tacit permission of the bishops.

"So far I have had no conflict with the church," says Cardenal, insisting that he does not carry arms or participate in guerilla attacks.

Born of a prominent Nicaraguan family, Cardenal left a promising military career in his country at age 31 for the obscure life of a cloistered monk in the Trappist monastery in Gethsemane, Ky. But there another contemplative author and monk, the late Thomas Merton, urged him to return to Nicaragua after ordination "to found a small lay community without the formalism of the medieval orders."

According to Cardenal, Merton taught him that "the contemplative cannot be aloof from the political struggle, especially in Latin America."

The community, founded in 1966, prospered. Soon Solentiname had a fish and farm cooperative, a clinic and a center for native artisans that has gained

international fame.

The Christian community's life centered around the mass celebrated in the chapel, or in a thatched hut or in the open air on one of the surrounding islands—accompanied by study of the Bible. The campesinos were encouraged to contribute their own insights as to the meaning of the scripture verses.

Cardenal recorded and published these commentaries in *The Gospel in Solentiname*, which has been translated in four languages.

"Contemplation leads to union with God, and it also carried us to revolution," the priest explains.

"Contemplation brought us to the point of identifying with the people, with the oppression they endured. Little by little we became more radical politically, together with the campesinos.

"Looking more deeply at the Bible, we came to understand that the essential gospel message is the bringing about of the kingdom of God here on earth. A just society of brotherhood and love between all human beings, where there are no exploiters and exploited, rich and poor. A society where everyone shares in common, like the first Christians."

How is the gospel of love of neighbor reconciled with the use of violence? "Every authentic revolutionary prefers non-violence," Cardenal answers, "but that is not an option under the Somoza regime."

The Somoza dynasty, frequently accused of flagrant violation of human rights including the massacre of campesinos, has controlled the Michigan-sized Central American nation for over 40 years.

Although Cardenal disclaims any leadership role in the guerilla movement, his influence is credited with winning support for the Sandinistas from a broad spectrum of Somoza opponents—from wealthy businessmen to poor campesinos.

(©1978 Pacific News Service)

Dow Kirkpatrick is a Methodist minister and writer currently covering church involvement in social change in Latin America.

# HOW COMPATIBLE ARE MARX & CHRIST?

**Jim Gorman** THE ADVANCE literature billed the conference as "The First North American Christian Marxist Conference." While that was true, organizers could be accused of splitting hairs; the well-publicized "Theology in the Americas" conference held in Detroit in the summer of 1975 was about Christianity and Marxism and was held in North America. But there are differences; the focus of this conference was clearly North America and its immediate socio-economic future.

Meeting outside of Philadelphia early this spring, about 200 participants gathered to struggle with the issues raised by Marxism in its varied forms. Participants came from all over the continent—Montreal, the Ivy League East, Chicago, California.

This was an academic conference in tone and process. The setting was bucolic—a creek with azaleas blooming along its bank ran like a Disneyland moat around the conference center. That picturesque scene belied the grueling pace of the plenary presentations and many sectional papers inside.

Besides academics, there were sev-

eral denominational executives present. World and global ministry board executives from at least four denominations attended. That may reflect the fact that the organizing committee is directly linked to the National Council of Churches by a group called "Christians Associated for Relationships with Eastern Europe" (CAREE).

This conference may be a sign that socialism, even Marxism, is again becoming a legitimate topic of conversation among liberal American Christianity. The importance of this conference was that it was not primarily about Marxism as it applies to Europe or Asia

or Latin America (presumably fairly "safe" academic topics). It was a gathering of Christians and Marxists and Christian Marxists to discuss the future of North America's economy and society using, perhaps for the first time in recent years, Marxian tools.

Marxists were invited from all points on the spectrum of the American left; however, it was clear that while democratic socialist Michael Harrington was enthusiastically received, Victor Perlo, economist for the Communist Party, was not. The tone of the conference leaned in favor of what Ernst Bloch called the "warm stream of Marxism."

Christian nervousness about such categories of Marxist theory such as "dialectical materialism" (materialism is the problem) and "economic determinism" were somewhat allayed by wading with Harrington and others in the warm stream. "You either think more organically about the concept of matter," one participant remarked, "or you blame the whole materialist thing on Engels."

But the issue of economic determinism was not so easily dismissed. Charles West, professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of several sympathetic books on Marx, asked a younger participant whether he would call himself a Marxist. After saying that he was, the younger man asked West if he could say the same.

"No, I'm not," West said without hesitation. "There seems to me to be other determinants for the human personality than economics." There was

still a hesitancy to reduce the power of God or God's love to purely economic terms.

Though the conference raised many areas of disagreement, the overall feeling was not argumentative. It stands as an indication of the openness with which the participants and their affiliated denominations are approaching dialogue. Though a modest sign, to be sure, its importance is too easily understated.

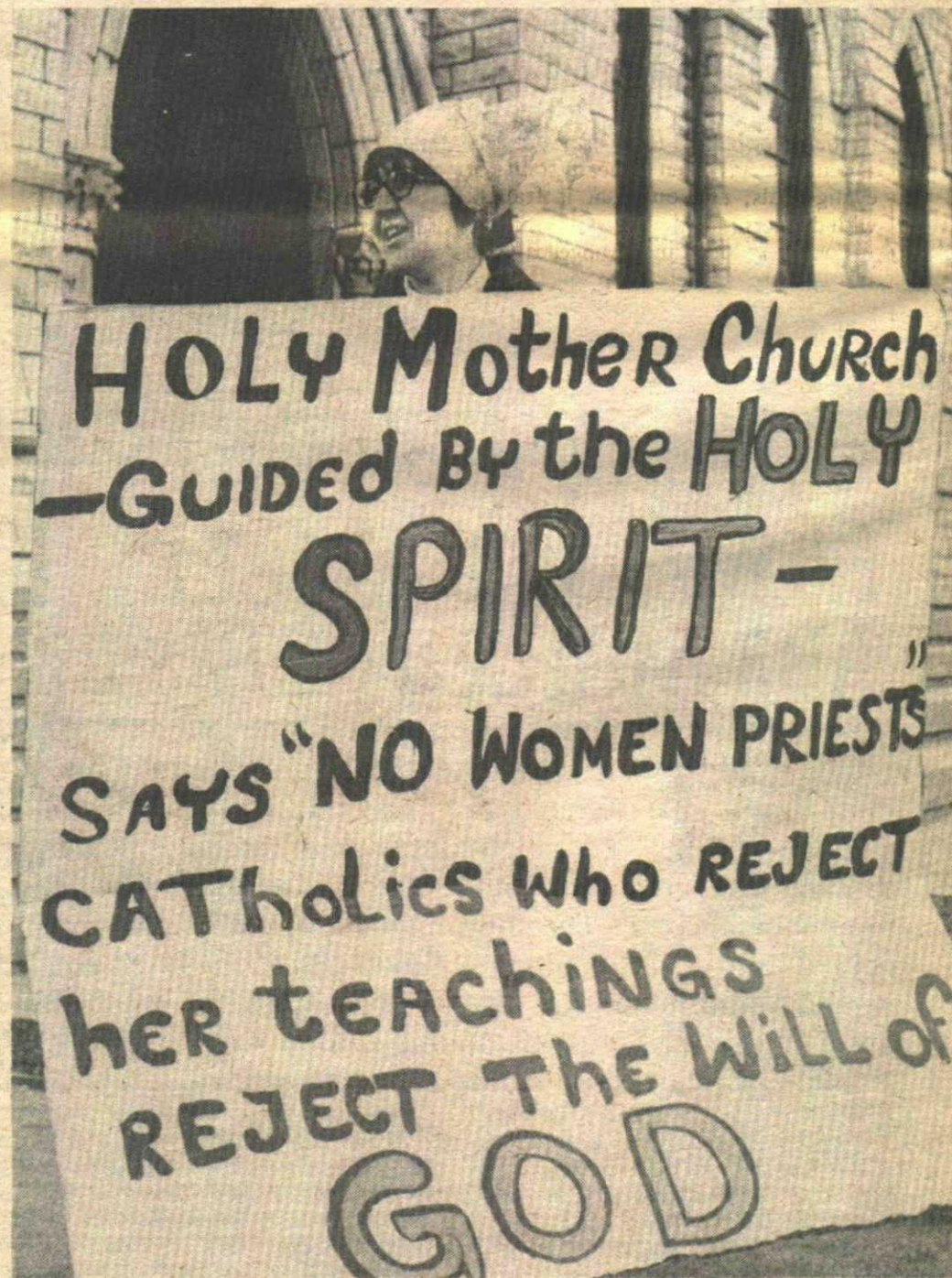
Many were there seeking tentative answers or positions that would explain how Christians and the Christian church could again accept responsibility for social change. They were asking whether Marx, or some other form of structural critique, could be helpful. Some—those who styled themselves Christian Marxists—had settled some of those questions.

The majority, however, wanted to find ways of working on social and economic justice from the perspective of the church. In a sense, they came to affirm one another in the knowledge that the church—in spite of a well deserved reputation for reactionary politics—still had revolutionary work to do, and that such work was politically feasible and biblically mandated.

It could safely be said that there was considerable agreement that the biblical God is a God of Justice who is impatient with feasts and solemn assemblies while there remains whole classes of people who are structurally excluded from the bounty of creation.

Jim Gorman is pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Chicago.





Women in the churches face many of the same problems as they do in the larger society, but in increasing numbers they are rising up and demanding equal rights and responsibilities. In the process they are transforming many traditional aspects of church society. Top: An anti-war protest in New York. Left: Elizabeth McAllister speaks at a memorial rally at Kent State. Above: Protest against the possibility of women priests. Bottom photos by Al DiFranco



# BORN-AGAINS MAKE NO CONCESSIONS TO AUTHORITY

Jim Wallis

**A**ERICAN evangelicals have been discovered. † This January the evangelical National Religious Broadcasters held its annual convention in Washington, D.C., as it has done for years. This time, however, the *Washington Post* carried a story on the convention before it even began. CBS camera crews filmed the opening session and beamed their report nationally. † The press room was bulging as media people from around the country, from Canadian television, and even from England, all gathered to cover the four-day session.

The event that prompted the media discovery of the evangelical world was the presidential campaign of a born-again Southern Baptist named Jimmy Carter. The tremendous media hype and focus upon evangelicals conveys a loud and clear message: that born-again religion is "in"—and everywhere.

Media fame has become the reward for religious conversion. Former White House villains, ex-revolutionaries, Olympic athletes, beauty queens, television and movie stars, generals, politicians, pornographers, and what by now must be more than half of the National Football League have all joined the rolls of most-celebrated converts.

The experience of being brought out of their ignored existence as a minority subculture has been a heady one for evangelicals, and one that is fraught with dangers.

For a very long time, evangelicals had considered themselves an overlooked minority group who believed they carried the heart of the American nation in their souls. For such true believers the experience of neglect at the hands of the majority culture has been a difficult one.

The media attention since the Carter candidacy has finally given evangelicals a long-awaited cultural acceptance and influence. Tired of being ignored or ridiculed, evangelicals now bask in the limelight of their new popularity. They also seem all too willing to be seduced by their culture.

**The former minority status of evangelical Christianity was founded upon the belief that Christians should be separate from the world.**

**The knowledge that Christians should demonstrate a different way of life than that practiced by the surrounding culture is, indeed, a biblical insight.** Unfortunately, evangelicals have characteristically made their stands against the culture mostly in the wrong places.

Twentieth century evangelicals have largely ignored the most basic conflicts between the gospel and American culture while clinging to carefully defined "separations" from the world over trivial matters of personal behavior.

It is the evangelicals' understandable reaction against this narrow legalism that stokes their new desire for cultural acceptance. The meaning of the present evangelical "revival," so far, is that evangelicals are accepting the culture on its own terms. After being neglected for so long, evangelicals are eager to prove that they can "make it" in this society.

And they are making it on the terms that this society understands the best: success, fame, prosperity, social influence, and above all a thorough-going loyalty to the "American way of life"—

fidelity to the American system of economics and politics.

This new evangelical embrace of America is not simply the old right-wing fundamentalist stance. It is a more subtle sense that success, acceptability and respect in this society should come naturally to evangelicals, and that conversion ought to produce these fruits.

Evangelicals are, therefore, more and more at ease in the land. As the old fundamentalist opposition to the world is dropped and evangelicals come out of the closet, the alliance between evangelical faith and the leading cultural values and social structures of America has become stronger than ever before.

How has the media's discovery of evangelical religion affected or will it affect the gospel's impact on this society?

Here again the situation is very confused and distorted. What the media-centered evangelical revival conveys to the larger society is that the born-again experience is a highly personalized matter that actually helps one to get along better in America.

The characteristics of the gospel that are least marketable—self-sacrifice, servanthood, the way of the cross, identification with the poor and oppressed, a prophetic witness to the state, a life of simplicity and sharing, justice and peace—are those characteristics that don't get communicated to the society when the media explains what being born again is all about.

The evangelical hunger for legitimacy is at the heart of the problem. Legitimacy becomes defined in terms of the present system. But is the present system legitimate in biblical terms?

The question is never asked or answered. The media image is of an evangelical world whose faith and style of life serves to reflect and affirm the most basic values of the system.

**There is, however, a small minority of evangelicals whose encounter with Jesus Christ and whose roots in the Bible are making them radicals in America.**

**Radicals sprung from the evangelical world are seeking the renewal of the church's life at the local level, and are influencing the wider church by calling people away from the reigning idolatries and providing the foundation for a more prophetic Christian social witness.** They could even help spark a radically progressive social movement in this country, offering some hope of renewed corporate vision.

Such a movement will probably come first around grassroots issues and concrete national problems. It will rest not so much on the gaining of political power as on the changing of consciousness and the broadening of the framework of political and economic conversation.

The recovery of the radical biblical

tradition in the U.S. has already begun. The key to it is the integration of spiritual and social renewal.

A new style of life rooted in the gospels is emerging as a number of evangelicals are uprooting themselves from the social and economic mainstream and relocating in the marginal sectors of American society—among the poor and dispossessed. This is changing their perspective as they learn to look at American reality from the bottom up instead of from the top down.

We live in one of the most self-centered cultures in history. We have an economic system that is the social rationalization of sheer selfishness. When the rhetorical veil is ripped away, our politics are revealed as being based on coldly calculated self-interest. Self fulfillment and satisfaction are the undisputed and unrivaled gods of this culture.

All this has produced a self-centered religion, and the born-again phenomenon has played into the self-centered consumer ethic of this society.

The leading question of the evangelical "revival" has become, "What can Jesus do for me, how can he make me happier, more content, more successful, better adjusted and more prosperous?"

When self-centeredness is a chief social value, it can easily become the goal and shape of religion. Conversion brings Jesus into my world, to make him mine, to use him for my purposes. Conversion becomes a thing that happens only within the self, a strictly personal experience.

The central call of the gospels—to follow Jesus and become a disciple—is what is most notably absent in the present born-again frenzy.

The central notion of conversion in the scriptures is essentially a turning from and a turning to. The fruit of conversion is the creation of a new life in a new people. In the Bible conversion is historically specific. And the times of genuine revival in church history have been most marked by an understanding of conversion that had concrete historical meaning.

For example, in the 19th century, Finney's preaching left abolitionist societies in its wake. People were called to turn from slavery and turn to Jesus Christ.

**Biblically, it is always the crucial response of repentance—and turning to God and to the fulfillment of God's purpose in history—that marks conversion. To convert means far more than to experience the psychological, emotional aspects of change through an inner experience. The biblical accent is clearly on a reversal of direction, a transfer of loyalties, a change in commitment leading to the creation of a new community.**

Conversion, in its original meaning, meant that those who had been transformed by Jesus Christ experienced a change in all their relationships, including their relationship to the world, to their possessions, to the poor and dispossessed, to the violence in their society, to the idols of their culture, and to the false worship of the state.

There has been much confusion about the meaning of conversion, especially where contemporary evangelicalism has been most widely discussed. People are being called to Christ in an historical vacuum.

We have forgotten that a relationship to Christ means a relationship to the purposes of Christ in history.

The connection between conversion and radical participation in God's historical purposes is the key to genuine revival. Anything less does fundamental damage to the meaning of conversion.

The meaning of conversion in our time must be intimately connected to the mad momentum of the nuclear arms race; to the desperate plight of the poor, the hungry, and the dispossessed; and to the quest for justice and human rights around the world.

As Christians become deeply involved in the cultural mainstream, drawing

close to the centers of political power, they are increasingly tempted to maintain that their faith deals only with matters of personal salvation and relationships and is thus devoid of political content. Every regime wants a definition of conversion it can control.

The central question is whether evangelical revival will be used to sanction and legitimate the present American order or whether the resurgence of biblical religion in this country will serve to call this order into question in fundamental ways.

The evangelical tradition has the capacity to fundamentally challenge the American status quo and to offer a fresh corporate vision of justice and peace firmly rooted in the biblical witness. But, thus far, the present evangelical revival has shown a characteristically evangelical preference for proclaiming personal virtue while ignoring its conformity to the most basic economic and political realities of the American power structure.

Evangelicals still seem to believe that the spread of personal piety is the most reliable standard for a nation's morality. What the evangelical movement has yet failed to say is that the biblical demands for justice and compassion bring the harshest kind of judgment to the system of wealth and power upon which the society is based.

**While the state will strive to keep evangelical religion a civil religion, a growing number of evangelicals will find their biblical faith making them increasingly**

## The longing for stability can destroy

**uncivil in regard to the present economic and political order.**

There has always been a very basic contradiction at the heart of America's use of biblical faith for its own purposes. That contradiction is slowly being exposed.

A revival of genuine biblical faith in this country may in fact provide the strongest foundation and resource for social criticism and social change. For while the Judaeo-Christian heritage has consistently been distorted to serve the interests of those in power, it is that same heritage that offers the most fundamental kind of challenge to the prevailing order.

A whole new generation of radical Christians may turn America's traditional affirmation of the biblical heritage on its head. That biblical heritage can then be used to attack the system rather than to defend it.

It is these biblical seeds of protest, political resistance, social change, and alternative vision that could most threaten the present American status quo. An American radicalism that is biblically based and conceived in the churches could be a far more serious threat to the established order in America than political responses that are based merely on secular ideology.

America has long sought to justify itself in Christian terms. That practice may come back to haunt the leaders of the American power structure as we witness a whole new generation of radicals whose opposition to the regime is based on their relationship to Jesus Christ and whose protest is cast in specifically biblical terms.

**Jim Wallis is the editor of *Sojourners* (1029 Vermont NW, Washington, DC 20005, subscriptions: \$12/yr.) where a longer version of this article appeared. It is adapted from the 1978 Florence Hamersley Walker Lecture presented at Chicago Theological Seminary.**



# CATHOLIC WOMEN CONFRONT THE PROCESS OF RENEWAL

Juli  
Loesch

**A**S A RADICAL alternative lifestyle, the religious Orders of the Roman Catholic Church have an amazing track record. In 1980, for instance, the women and men living under The Rule of Benedict, the oldest code of decentralist cooperative living in the West, will celebrate their 1,500th anniversary. (I remember giggling when some friends from Movement for a New Society boasted that their commune had hung together for "five long years"! ) Longevity isn't the only—or the most important—sign of success for social organizations; but surely those interested in "intentional communities" have much to learn from such a long-standing and vigorous collective experience.

At present there are over 125,000 Catholic women in religious orders (sisters and nuns) in the U.S. alone. These women have influenced—for good or ill—every generation of Americans and the institutional structures of the nation since its founding. Daughters of hard-working immigrants, they founded and administered schools and hospitals, working for subsistence wages. These sisters are the basic labor force, the backbone of social services of the American Catholic Church.

When such a large workforce transforms its own lifestyle and internal politics, we might expect that transformation to have some impact on society. Yet the enormous changes made by these religious women in the last ten years, when noticed at all by outsiders, have largely been misunderstood and trivialized ("I guess ol' Sister Mary Rosary just decided to kick the habit, ha ha.")

It's not generally realized that these 125,000 American women deliberately took apart their own collective lifestyle, debated it, re-evaluated it, and then put it back together in the late '60s and early '70s. During a decade of phenomenal political and cultural change, this re-founding of the great religious orders may have broad significance for society as a whole.

*Climb Along the Cutting Edge* (Paulist Press, 1977), an analysis of the sisters' "revolution" written by five Benedictines, describes how renewal hit the 2,200 members of the Federation of St. Scholastica. It is a microcosm of the pain and process of change in every U.S. community of women religious, Benedictine or not.

When convents were founded in the U.S. in the 19th century they were poor—and served the needs of poor immigrants, especially the children and the sick. Delegates to the Chapters of Renewal (the self-government meetings from 1966-74 that brought in the changes) still had this working-class orientation. Of their fathers, 52 percent were blue collar workers or small farmers, and 65 percent had less than four years of high school education. Of their mothers, 83 percent worked at home full-time, and 66 percent had less than four years of high school. The sister-delegates came mostly from large families: 67 percent had grown up with four or more brothers and sisters; 16 percent with eight or more.

The delegates' own educational level was quite high. Due to their training as Catholic school teachers and health workers, only 5 percent held less than a Bachelor's degree. Practically all had full-time jobs, with salaries, even for hospital administrators and college pres-

idents, ranging between \$1,500 and \$3,000 a year—paid directly to the convent.

Having voluntarily chosen poverty for religious reasons, the sisters weren't bothered by the pay scale. But there were increasing tensions between the work they were expected to do, and the restrictive lifestyle that had been mandated for them since medieval times. Encouraged by changes in the Catholic Church following Vatican Council II (1962-65), they began asking for more voice in the decisions affecting their lives.

Some may assume that this demand came from the younger sisters, perhaps a bit more rebellious, more secular, less obedient. However, the Benedictines' study shows that this was not the case. Not one delegate elected to the Renewal Chapters had been a sister for less than ten years. Forty-five percent had been Benedictines for 11-25 years; 4-percent for more than 50 years. They were women who, when polled, found pre-Vatican II religious life stable (96 percent), meaningful (77 percent), joyful, satisfying, and effective (70 percent).

On the other hand, these same delegates found pre-Vatican II religious life restrictive (90 percent), introverted (77 percent), and even regressive (70 percent). For many, apparently, the price of peace was conformity; the effectiveness was measured by old goals; the happiness came with severe limits on personal development.

They also suffered from role conflict. In the convent they were expected to be docile and childlike in their submission to authority. In their work they were expected to be mature, competent professionals. They were often put into dilemmas that produced guilt: e.g., should they work with student committees after school hours (and miss choral prayer back at the convent) and so be "good teachers"? Or should they go straight to the convent and be "good religious"?

This role conflict, especially for intelligent, highly-motivated women, is one of the most difficult stress situations of the human condition. To be considered (or to consider yourself) an irresponsible teacher or a lukewarm religious affected self-esteem as well as social value.

A glance at the typical day in a Benedictine convent of the 1950s and most of the '60s shows why conflict could be chronic:

4:50 AM	Rising Bell
5:10	Choral morning prayers (i.e. chanted in Latin) and meditation
6:30	Mass, followed by more choral prayer
7:45	Breakfast (eaten in silence)
8:30-	Work (at home or at school)
11:30	
11:45	Examination of Conscience
12:00	Lunch (silent, except for

table reading) followed by choral prayer

1:00-	Work (at home or at school)
4:30 PM	
4:45	Matins (choral prayer) and spiritual reading
6:00	Supper (silent except for table reading), kitchen chores
7:00	Recreation (all seated in the common recreation room)
8:00	More choral prayer, followed by the Great Silence
9:00	Lights out for those who were neither students nor teachers
10:00	Lights out for students and teachers

When you consider that no deviation from this schedule, however tiny, was allowed without express permission from the Superior, you get a notion of how regimented this lifestyle really was.

Yet the ancient tradition carried with it into the last half of the 20th century the seeds of its own change. In the 6th century AD, Benedict of Nursia incorporated into his Rule a definite theme of participatory government and decentralism (in church language, "collegiality" and "subsidiarity").

Government was to be neither autocratic nor democratic, but "cenobitic," basic decisions being made through a communal "discernment" process under a prioress (Superior) whose prime function is to unite the community. Each priory is autonomous, self-supporting, and self-governing. These themes, suppressed in 19th century European religious houses, were reclaimed and strongly reaffirmed during Renewal.

The five traditional Benedictine vows (poverty, chastity, obedience, stability and conversion of life) accepted as tools for spiritual freedom to help the individual "seek God," were also reconsidered in ways that seem radically new, but are actually so old that they merely look new.

"Poverty" was defined as emancipation from an alienated, consumeristic lifestyle; the refusal to eat the fruits of oppression. To many sisters it also implies a call to live with and be a part of the poorer classes, sharing material and spiritual goods with those in need. "Live simply, so that others may simply live."

"Chastity" was reaffirmed as a commitment to supportive relationships with other women, recognizing the need for affection and intimacy. A celibate love

for God and for other people is not seen as being superior to sexual love, but as a free choice for the sake of a shared community life that is expected to endure until death.

"Obedience" was redefined in an egalitarian way, stressing responsible input into decision-making. When a policy is established, the sister then accepts it with a sincere openness to its truth and value.

"Stability" is a commitment to enter a kind of "family" where people help each other live holy, integrated lives over the long haul. It is a "stay-put-ness" for the sake of knowing each other over long periods of time, working as reliable partners for long-term goals, while being faithful to the needs of those who can have no mobility (such as the sick and infirm of the community.)

"Conversion of life" is now seen as a lifelong process of rebirth and growth away from the shallow, violent, and alienating habits of materialist culture, and towards a fuller development of personal gifts for all.

A dozen years ago, the well-trained Sister was dependent, grave, sober, frugal, reserved and docile. All of these are quite obviously the marks of a model wife by some cultural standards. Most contemporary religious women reject that they are the necessary marks of holiness or wholeness in a mature adult human being.

The process of renewal empowered the Sisters to be agents of systematic—and systemic—change in their own lives. And since the personal is political, a growing number of Catholic sisters see themselves as agents of change in the larger society.

Recent headlines dramatize this fact: *First Woman Religious Elected to Arizona State Legislature.*

*Mother Superior Chairs Committee for Prison Reform.*

*Sister Named Director of Vermont Human Services Agency.*

*Nuns Jailed in Anti-Nuclear Protest.*

*Sisters Face Federal Charges for Aiding and Counseling Mexican Aliens.*

These women are not isolated activists, but members of closely-knit, supportive households explicitly oriented toward social change and liberation. Prayer and contemplation, which are still central values in the religious orders, are seen to interpenetrate the world of action. The insights and the visions for



the future that are developed in prayer, draw the sister into action on behalf of justice and for the transformation of the world.

The next decade may see more North American religious women and men, like so many of their Latin American counterparts, moving into positions of direct

confrontation with oppressive political and social "powers that be." As Benedictine leader Joan Chittister, OSB, observes, "Our values may have placed us on the cutting edge of history."

**Juli Loesch is a member of PAX, a Christian center for non-violence in Erie, Pa.**



# IN THESE TIMES

Editorial

## Dissent raises issues for Soviets

The recent trials of dissidents in the Soviet Union raise three distinct issues: the lack of democracy in the Soviet Union, the relation between socialism and democracy, and the U.S.-Soviet relations as they affect the prospects for world peace.

The trials illustrate that for all the reforms since Stalin, the Soviet political system is not democratic. All the defendants were charged with and convicted of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. (Shcharansky was, in addition, charged with and convicted of treasonable espionage.) Unlike trials during the Stalin era, the defendants were not forced to confess guilt, and the state followed certain prescribed legal norms.

But it is precisely those norms, provided for in the Soviet constitution and criminal code, that violate democratic principles. They sanction deformed and inadequate protections of due process for citizens and they authorize the state to define permissible speech. Soviet law permits punishment of citizens for their opinions and for expressing them in a national or international forum.

It vests sovereignty in a party elite rather than in the people. No such system of law can be squared with political democracy. The anti-semitic overtones of the campaign against the dissidents are also in fundamental conflict with principles of democracy, no less of socialism.

Socialists of all kinds in the West—and growing numbers of them in the East and the non-aligned nations—have come to understand that without political liberty for the people, strict limitations on the powers of the state, and renunciation of a one-party political monopoly, there can be no genuine workers' democracy under socialism, and no socialist movement capable of winning majoritarian



### Soviets cannot claim to lead international socialist movement while trampling on democracy.

popular allegiance under capitalism in the West.

Socialist (including communist) criticism of and protest against Soviet undemocratic institutions and practices, such as have occurred throughout Western Europe, are therefore obligatory in the cause of forging the bonds between democracy and socialism and hence in strengthening the socialist movements within the various nations and internationally. Such leftist protest, unlike that of the U.S. government, is as concerned for the rights of communist, socialist, and workers dissidents in the Soviet Union and East Europe (and

other socialist countries) as for the rights of those who may oppose socialism.

The Soviet Communists, on the other hand, cannot claim leadership of an international socialist movement while at the same time opposing and trampling upon principles of democracy considered basic to the socialist cause by fellow socialists in other countries.

The Carter administration's use of the Human Rights club in freezing detente and heating up the old cold war tensions delivers more blows against partians of democracy in the Soviet Union than against the Soviet elite. Its motivation is

also suspect. The state of democracy in the Soviet Union is no different now than during the recent period of detente. Why is Carter now making this issue a barrier against sustaining the momentum of detente? Why does he not make it the same barrier to cooperative relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and other pro-capitalist tyrannies?

Is he taking the path of another cold war crusade, so dangerous to world peace, that liberal Democrats seem incorrigibly to stir up whenever they enter the White House? Must the nation always be forced to choose between Republican reaction and martial Democratic adventures?

And if President Carter is so devoutly dedicated to Human Rights everywhere, why doesn't he, for one example, direct his Department of Justice to intervene on behalf of the Wilmington 10 in North Carolina? And why doesn't he stand by and commend his UN ambassador Andrew Young when he suggests that the U.S. should honestly acknowledge and deal with the blemishes on its own record of democracy and when he reminds us that in supporting human rights Americans should avoid self-righteous hypocrisy, smug complacency and chauvinistic belligerence?

Concern for democracy in the Soviet Union is legitimate and important. The need to develop and strengthen the bonds between democracy and socialism is urgent and compelling. No less so is the cause of world peace and hence of improved relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. We should not permit the first two to be pitted against the Third. That way lies not human rights, democracy and peace in the world (or in the U.S.), but the tyranny and destruction that come with national chauvinism, arms races, and war.

## Fraser walks out on consensus politics

In a recent editorial (July 5) we said that the old game of "business unionism" is over and that recognition of the need for a new departure in American politics is emerging within the ranks and leadership of the labor movement.

The latest evidence of this is UAW president Douglas A. Fraser's statements upon his resignation from the semi-official Labor-Management Group. Composed of eight members each from business and labor, and headed by former Labor Secretary John T. Dunlop, the group, like similar arrangements since the end of World War II, is designed to sustain a labor-capital consensus in advising President Carter on policy matters.

Fraser said he resigned to strip away the facade of agreement covering the reality of deepening conflict between the corporations and labor. Though the AFL-CIO has not yet followed Fraser in his walk off the Dunlop committee, many of their leaders are indicating publicly that they share his view.

The "last straw" was the death of the labor law reform bill in the Senate, which may well have put the final nail in the consensus' coffin. Labor leaders expected that already unionized large corporations would at least remain neutral on the bill, which provides for moderate procedural changes in rules governing organizing and representation elections. Far from it. Large corporations, including those with representatives on the Dunlop committee, like General Motors and United States Steel, joined the offensive in a "multi-million-dollar lobbying campaign" (*Business Week*, July 31) that culminated in the Senate filibuster in June killing the bill.

The falling-out over labor law reform

comes on the heels of a string of labor setbacks in a time of Democratic control of the White House and Congress: defeat of the common site picketing bill; gutting of the Humphrey-Hawkins employment bill; a paltry increase in the minimum wage; the hamstringing of OSHA inspection of

CIO strategist told the press that "we are going to have to reassess whether our goals should be sought legislatively, or instead if we should seek them through the courts and...aggressive confrontations in organizing drives and across the bargaining table."

### Business leaders have chosen to wage one-sided class war against working people.

health and safety hazards; business oriented energy legislation making its way through Congress; tax breaks for business and the rich and little or none for working people; cutbacks in public employment and in real income for public employees; mounting business and government propaganda blaming unions for inflation.

In view of all this, Fraser has drawn the conclusion that "leaders of the business community, with few exceptions, have chosen to wage a one-sided class war today in this country—a war against working people, the unemployed, the poor, the minorities, the very young, and the very old, and even many in the middle class of our society." Perhaps of greater significance, he went public with a conclusion that in the past would more likely have remained private.

AFL-CIO leaders, too, are going public with talk of painful reassessments of their political strategy, which may be taken up at the federation's executive council meeting in Chicago Aug. 7. One AFL-

Fraser told a press conference soon after quitting the Dunlop committee that "for the first time in years," union leaders are seriously contemplating a labor party as an alternative to the two major parties. While he himself is not yet prepared to take such a step, he said the UAW would work to "reforge links" with other anti-corporate movements among blacks and other minorities, the poor, women's organizations, church groups, etc., for broad political and economic action. Even short of a labor party, such coalition politics points toward moving from narrow-interest unionism to social unionism.

In a similar mood, Machinists president William Winpisinger has stated on public television (to the indignant consternation of consensus-monger Ben Wattenberg) that it was time for American labor to shift its political outlook from seeking consensus within the corporate system to building a movement for democratic socialism as in the best interests of working people.

That such talk is coming from labor's leadership, including from many among its old guard (a recent speech by AFL-CIO's Lane Kirkland about deepening class fissures is another case in point), is all the more significant. Whether or not they mean what they say is at this point less important than that they feel compelled to say it.

The old consensus vital to the old business unionism is a thing of the past: It can no longer "deliver the goods" counted on by labor leaders to keep them solidly planted upon their base. That is because the condition for the consensus—an expanding economy that could yield "more" without redistributing wealth and power—is a thing of the past. Labor leaders realize that if they do not adjust (or at least appear to adjust) to the new conditions of class conflict and political organization, they too will become a thing of the past.

It is for the socialist left, within and without the labor movement, to understand the present ferment in labor as symptomatic of a new stage in the nation's political history, and help build the bridge from the "old consensus" to a new departure of a labor-based popular socialist movement—whether or not labor's present leaders are willing to cross that bridge now that they've come to it.

That will mean that we socialists must rid ourselves of doctrinaire ways of thinking and sectarian styles of behavior in forthrightly articulating a program of democratic socialism suited to the interests and experiences of the majority of Americans. Fraser has taken a walk—let us see that it continues to the bridge and over it.



# Letters

## Help is on the way

**I**N ANSWER TO YOUR PLEA FOR funds to tide you over the present financial crisis, I am enclosing a check for \$10. I hope that all your other subscribers hear your plea and come through with at least \$10.

Retired, I am living on a fixed and limited income. It is a real sacrifice for me to send the check for \$10, but it is difficult for me to imagine this country without such publications as *IN THESE TIMES*, *The Nation* (whose former editor, Carey McWilliams, you eulogized July 12), and the *Newsletter of the Democratic Left*. Having been a writer and an associate editor for the *CIO News*, the *American Federationist* and *The Public Employee* in Washington, D.C., for a score of years, I think I know a good story when I see one. Every week *IN THESE TIMES* is chock-full of good stories.

—Frederick U. Ross  
Palo Alto, Calif.

## Long distance struggle

**T**HANKS FOR YOUR COVERAGE of our court suit to protect the right of union members and elected stewards to hold views different from those of the union administration (*ITT*, July 12). The decision of the Appeals Court has potentially disastrous consequences for all workers in organized labor, and particularly for rank-and-file activists. While the focus of the suit is the free speech question, the real questions are the larger issues of union democracy and union policy. My removal from office is more than a violation of my free speech rights—it is an attack on the ability of the membership to organize itself around a program of changing the union.

I was removed as steward in the Communications Workers of America not simply because I spoke out, but because I advocated organizing for a possible strike at contract expiration and for focusing bargaining priorities on job security (a shorter workweek and a no-layoff clause) in the face of automation, layoffs, part-timing, and downgrades. These positions apparently are cardinal sins to our union officials who accept layoffs as the "needs of business" and then attempt to minimize their "unfortunate" impact rather than oppose them.

In our local, as the union has taken a softer and softer position against the company, we have seen the number of membership meetings cut in half, stewards decertified for criticizing union policy (or lack of policy), members instructed to cross picketlines of fellow CWA locals, and shopfloor newsletters banned or repressed out of existence. At the same time, the Bell System is automating at a rapid pace, and the workforce is shrinking.

We didn't want to go to court—it was a last resort. The legal system is no friend of workers, and in fact, the Landrum-Griffin Act, under which we filed suit, is an anti-labor law. We are not looking for more government in union affairs; we are trying to prevent the use of already existing legislation to suppress rank-and-file militance. We are continuing the suit because of the broad implications of the Appeals decision. But the resources needed are beyond our means, and we are no longer in a position to fight by ourselves.

We are a group of New York City telephone workers, unaffiliated with any organization. To continue the fight, we need the support of other workers and trade unionists. We'd appreciate hearing from other workers who face similar situations in their unions. (Send letters and contributions to Telephone Workers Legal Defense Committee, 410

Seventh St., Brooklyn, NY 11215, phone (212) 622-1365, or (212) 768-6492.)

No matter what the outcome of the suit, the struggle will not be won or lost in court. It will continue in the shops and in the union. And I hope *ITT* will continue and expand its coverage of worker activism on a rank-and-file level.

—Dave Newman  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## On the left with "right-to-life"

**I**AM WRITING ABOUT A RECENT development in the "right-to-life" movement. Progressive forces have been present in the movement from the very beginning. And their presence is beginning to produce results.

At the convention of the National Right to Life Committee that was recently held in St. Louis, delegates unanimously adopted a resolution calling for them to "act when life is threatened by hunger and disease, by poverty and violence... We pledge that together we will raise the understanding and awaken the conscience of the American people to injustice. We pledge that together we will address the problems that cause other Americans to sacrifice their unborn. We want to put the world on notice that we care about the born as much as the unborn."

The "right-to-life" movement has never been intrinsically reactionary. The right-wing has exploited the anger and the frustration of the politically inexperienced movement for their own ends. Perhaps the time has finally come when diverse and previously hostile elements can unite.

Nobody wants abortions. Maybe a common front can be established on behalf of reforms that could reduce the frequency of abortion. Initiatives such as day care facilities, pregnancy benefits, and welfare reform could well win widespread support when framed from such a perspective.

—Michael Stone  
St. Louis, Mo.

## Celebrating UN Human Rights Declaration

**M**EIKLEJOHN CIVIL LIBERTIES Institute invites you to join in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights on Dec. 10, 1978. In preparation is a Human Rights Calendar 1979, featuring excerpts from the Declaration illustrated by Ben Shahn, Rockwell Kent, Miro, Daumier, and others. The images were selected by the Ben and Beatrice Goldstein Foundation of New York City, producers of several recent art shows.

The Declaration, a poetic document, has been set to music by James F. Wood. His *Human Rights Cantata* will be performed in several cities this fall. The Institute is distributing the score.

—Ann Fagan Ginger  
Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute  
Berkeley, Calif.

## Irish Muppets show

**T**OM DAMMANN'S INTERVIEW with Mairead Corrigan (*ITT*, July 5) requires a response. Corrigan's position as one of two symbols of an organization, the Peace People, is accurately portrayed. She equates pacification with social anesthesia. This equation makes the "predominantly Catholic, middle-class Irish Americans" on Beaver Island, Mich., quite happy—as it does the Queen of England and the heads of the multinational corporations who control Northern Ireland's economy. Corrigan's simple formula helps them to forget or ignore the anguish in Northern Ireland of the oppressed Irish Roman Catholics there. Corrigan would also not be likely to talk about how unemployed Irish Catholics are used as a threat to employed Irish Protestants so that Northern Ireland has the lowest average wages, the lowest absentee rate, and the highest productivity rate in its industrial in-

stallations in the British Isles.

Corrigan and her co-leader of the Peace People, Betty Williams, with the aid of their clever press agent, Ciaran McKeown, have put on what one Irish journalist calls a perpetual international Muppets Show. The show has rated high in British and American media, but, after the first flash of mass prayer meetings, their following in Northern Ireland has rapidly dwindled.

Serious efforts at developing a united lower-class effort to solve Northern Ireland's problems are not nurtured by the media. They would mean an end to Anglo-Saxon racism, the development and enforcement of a bill of rights and the socialization of industry.

As Russell Stetler pointed out in his book on the Northern Ireland "troubles" of this period, *The Battle of the Bogside* (1970), "Britain's 'civilisation' has rested on centuries of violent racism, colonial conquest and social injustice. The Northern Ireland problem is rooted in these traditions." Martin Luther King, Jr., had the type of movement that might make a dent in the Northern Irish situation. Corrigan and Williams do not.

—Alfred McClung Lee  
Short Hills, N.J.

## Radical Historians

**W**E WERE PLEASED TO SEE Staughton Lynd's comments on MARHO: The Radical Historians' Organization (*ITT*, May 10), but were disappointed by his critical tone, which may mislead readers unfamiliar with our work.

It is difficult, as Lynd noted, for Americans to engage in serious, socialist history which reaches beyond the academic world. We recognize that our efforts in this direction have not always been adequate, but we are in process of growth and believe we are beginning to succeed.

Our journal, the *Radical History Review*, combines Marxist scholarship with reviews, interviews, movement reports, and teaching suggestions. The latest issue, "Labor and Community Militance in Rhode Island," was a joint project of historians, workers, and community organizers in Providence. Future issues will examine the history of sexuality; class and culture; and class and spatial relations.

The address given in Lynd's review was incorrect. A free brochure describing our organization may be obtained from MARHO, John Jay College, 445 West 59th St., New York, NY 10019. The subscription rates quoted were also incorrect: \$7.50 (unemployed) or \$10.00 (employed) will buy an annual subscription to the *Review*, the *Radical Historian Newsletter*, and announcements of forums and conferences.

—New York Editorial Collective  
MARHO

## Andrew Young knows first-hand

**A**MB. ANDREW YOUNG'S STATEMENT about the numerous political prisoners in the U.S. was based on personal knowledge. He had been a political prisoner. He had worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and they had been in and out of jails in the South. And he knew that new victims were being claimed daily.

Perhaps Mr. Young thought he could get Americans to face the fact that oppression and suppression exist in this country, and that victims of these evils can be found easily. We don't come into court with entirely clean hands in the matter of human rights.

Want to take a look around for political prisoners? What about the native American Indians who have been framed, indicted, tried, jailed, freed, etc. The names that come quickest to mind are Skyhorse and Mohawk. They are but two of the many framed in Florida. Andrew Young could easily identify enough such cases to make up his quota. They may be convicted of horse stealing or

disorderly conduct, but they are nevertheless political prisoners.

—Ralph Russell  
Washington, D.C.

## Written off?

**T**HE OCCASIONAL LETTERS written to protest, bemoan, exhort and question the lack of a consistent socialist-feminist perspective on any and everything in *IN THESE TIMES* are a small ray of hope.

Apart from that, there is almost no mention of women, of a critique of patriarchy as it intersects with capitalism (and socialism such as it is on earth right now), of sexism in American culture. For instance, how is it that the editors can run an "Images of Work" photography spread and neglect to show one working woman? How can a special section on the black movement completely avoid mention of the special and frequently totally separate development of black women's theory, art, politics?

My fear is that the letters from concerned women will stop, that *ITT* will be written off and, more importantly, that socialist-feminism will be written off as insensitive and maybe even inimical to the rights, demands and questions of the strong-and-growing women's movement.

—Anita Diamant  
Allston, Mass.

## Construction workers and public employment

**Y**OUR DISCUSSION OF THE CRISIS in New York City construction (*ITT*, June 28) was informative and timely. Construction unions have been severely damaged in the last several years. The catastrophic unemployment (in some NYC locals over 90 percent of the workers have been out of work for over a year) has eroded medical benefits and shaken pension plans. Competition from non-union firms, as your article indicated, has markedly increased, though for many workers—ironworkers, lathers, pipefitters and laborers—renovation work has little effect since the bulk of their employment rests with new starts.

A sizeable bulk of construction work is actually a form of contracted public employment: schools, libraries, hospitals, firehouses. So the fiscal crisis of the city has hurt construction workers even more than it has hurt public workers. In effect, construction unionists have to come to realize that they are in much the same boat as other public workers. Over the years, on the local and on the national level, there has been a festering antagonism between construction unions and unions of the public sector. But it is becoming increasingly clear that such antagonism only damages workers of respective organizations. Mounting pressures on all forms of public employment require new strategies and deeper forms of solidarity.

In the last few months, the international president of the Bricklayers has ousted most of the local officials in and around the metropolitan area and signed a three-year contract, reducing and freezing wages for the duration of the contract. As a result, a rank-and-file organization has sprung up challenging the contract. Veteran bricklayers are not optimistic. Whatever the outcome, construction unionists must begin to move towards a wider sense of trade union activity.

—James Celenza  
Providence, R.I.

*Editor's Note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.*



Jack Clark

# Leftwing human rights protestors threaten myth of Soviet socialism

"Socialism—yes. Gulag—no."  
"KGB—Gestapo."

Protestors in a July 11 Paris demonstration chanted those and similar slogans to make clear their unhappiness with the rising wave of Soviet repression symbolized by the trials of Anatoly Shcharansky and Aleksander Ginzburg. Among those participating in the Paris demonstration were officials of all the French labor federations (including the Communist-oriented CGT), members of the small left-socialist party, the PSU, and the secretary of the Paris section of the French Communist party, Henri Fizbin, who is also a member of the PCF's Political Bureau.

In Italy the next day the newly-elected Socialist President Sandro Pertini appealed to the Soviet government to respect the rights of Shcharansky and Ginzburg. And the Italian Communist party made clear its unhappiness with the trials in a sharply-worded statement: "We do not know the ideas of the defendants, but their ideas and the fact that they profess them can not, in our view, be the object of legal prosecution." The statement went on to say that democracy and liberty are inseparable from "our concept of socialism."

Elsewhere in the world, too, the left has recoiled from the monstrous campaign Soviet authorities are waging against dissidents, against workers and particularly against Jews. The British Communist Party has protested the trials, and British unions with strong Communist contingents have called on the International Labour Organization to investigate the Soviet repression of a group of workers who have formed an Association of Free Trade Unions. The International Confederation

of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) composed primarily of West European socialist union federations has also called on the ILO to investigate what the Soviets did to these worker dissidents, the so-called Klebanov group.

Such protests and actions by worker organizations and left parties get fewer headlines than the statements of concern

struggle for world revolution would proceed by different means.

In part, such assurances represent a conservative bureaucracy's genuflection before the symbols of its supposed legitimacy. But in part this insistence on the continued struggle against capitalism, particularly Brezhnev's formulation of the continuing ideological struggle, rec-

## Carter's human rights campaign gets media in the West, but European protesters may have more impact.

President Carter has issued (which are to be welcomed and supported by the left). The media even pays more attention to the Cold War saber-rattling of Nixon, Ford and Moynihan. (Moynihan's proposal that if the Soviets go on repressing their dissidents the U.S. should no longer be interested in arms control must be opposed by all who wish to move away from the possibilities of nuclear conflagration.) Yet the activities of the left in support of the broad democratic movement in the USSR may overshadow the impact of the President's statements. And the left's activity on this front is vital for the left's own sake.

Ever since the first signs of a thaw in the Cold War, Khrushchev and then Brezhnev have insisted that easing tensions does not equal an acceptance of the international status quo. On the contrary, they have assured Party Congresses and Communist leaders around the world that the

ognizes the power of the Soviet myth.

Ever since 1917 millions of people all over the world who dream of better societies have looked toward Moscow. Workers in the West have often identified with defense of what was presumed to be a workers' state. Revolutionaries in the colonial and former colonial world looked toward the Soviet model as an alternative to domination by the Western market.

Over the years the Soviets have undermined their own myth with show trials, a pact with the Nazis, forced collectivizations and continuing repression. Since the West managed to create its own share of atrocities and to dominate the world, the myth lives on.

As the Soviets crack down hard on their various dissidents, they become visibly annoyed with Western "interference" as practiced by Carter. Sometimes it has its beneficial effects; sometimes the "KGB-

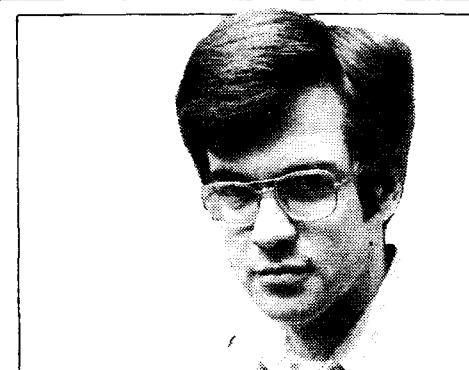
Gestapo" and their political leaders decide to crack down harder. But workers taking to the streets of Paris shouting "socialism—yes, gulag—no"—that kind of interference is harder to dismiss.

Enough such protests not only endanger the survival of the Soviet myth, they can also give workers in neighboring Eastern European countries dangerous ideas (like the idea that socialism really has nothing to do with sentencing intellectuals and Jews to hard labor for disagreeing with Party officials or talking to journalists the political police don't like).

The Soviets do respond to pressure from the left. Shcharansky's prosecutors asked for a 15-year sentence instead of for the death penalty. Continuing the protest and pressure might lead to a further let-up.

Even if it doesn't (Soviet authorities, after all, are serious about ridding themselves of this nuisance of political dissent), the protests by the Western left are crucially important for the Western left itself. There is the immediate political reason recognized by the Eurocommunist parties: voters and potential supporters won't be convinced by professions of democratic faith on the part of those who fail to protest these outrages.

But there are deeper, more compelling reasons to join in these protests. All of us who agree with the Italian Communists that democracy, liberty and socialism are inseparable need for the sake of our own principled consistency to be clear about that concept. We need to be outraged and to act when basic political and trade union rights are violated by dictators of the left or of the right, by General Pinochet or President Brezhnev.



## DONALD SHAFFER ASSOCIATES, INC.

ALL FORMS OF INSURANCE

Specialists in Pension & Employee Benefit Planning

11 GRACE AVENUE  
Great Neck, N.Y. 11021  
212-895-7005  
516-466-4642

## Peoples College of Law

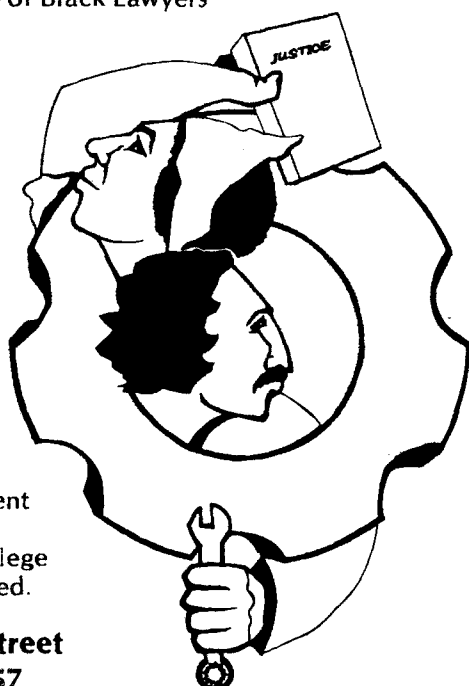
Founded by: La Raza Law Students Association  
Asian Law Collective, National Lawyers Guild  
and National Conference of Black Lawyers

PCL's goals are:  
to train peoples' lawyers and be a  
Third World/Working Class school.

Its unaccredited, four-year evening program leads to a J.D. and the California Bar Exam. Tuition is \$350 per semester.

Admissions based primarily on the demonstrated commitment to the struggle for social change. Two years of college or equivalent also required.

2228 West Seventh Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90057  
213/388-8171



LAWRENCE HILL & CO. Publishers, Inc.

## BOOKS FROM LAWRENCE HILL PUBLISHERS:

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN COMMUNIST

PEGGY DENNIS  
The wife of Eugene Dennis, former General Secretary of the Communist Party, U.S.A., tells the story behind their political careers, from the thirties to the present. A valuable historical document—and a warm, moving narration.  
Cloth \$12.95. Paper \$5.95.

### THE ITALIAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM: An interview with Giorgio Napolitano of the Italian Communist Party

ERIC HOBSBAWM, translated by John Cammett and Victoria DeGrazia  
These interviews assume a special importance in view of the increasing influence of the PCI on the Italian and European political scene.  
Cloth \$6.50. Paper \$3.95.

### SOUTH AFRICA AND U.S. MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

ANN AND NEVA SEIDMAN  
Documents the extent to which U.S. multinationals penetrate the South African economy and bolster the apartheid regime.  
Cloth \$10.00. Paper \$4.95.

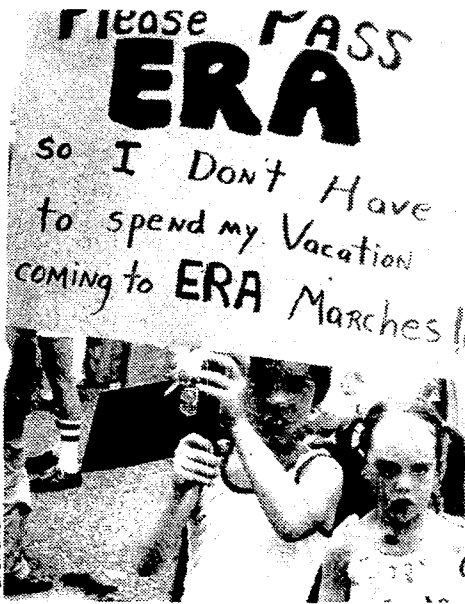
### UNCLE SAM—SUPER COP A Satirical View of American History

JIM HUGHES  
Columbus to Watergate—American history exposed in cartoons.  
Paper \$3.95.

Order through:  
In These Times  
1509 North Milwaukee Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60622  
MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO LAWRENCE HILL & CO.  
ADD 50¢ POSTAGE AND HANDLING



# ERA EXPRESS



We felt we were a part of something historic, like we'd read about in history books. Congress will have to listen now.

Continued from page 24.

see ERA as a matter of record, of fact, in the eyes of government. Make it legal."

"I hope my being there will help," added Eric Robinson, 21, a housepainter from Harvey, Ill. "Equal rights is important. I want my rights and to compete on an equal footing. Many people, men or women, would rather have it set one way or another."

"If we lose the extension, we lose ERA and our visibility," said Cindy Kirshman, 24, a social worker at the Jane Addams Hull House. "As a woman, I feel I've been discriminated against in all facets of my life—walking down the street, going into a restaurant on a Friday night by yourself, the list can go on forever. Especially if you're a single woman. You're not as valuable to your parents, and you're not seen as a totally whole individual."

Fred Neerhoff, 34, and Lidy Zaat, 35, both from Delft, the Netherlands, are in the U.S. for a year while Neerhoff is doing civil-engineering research at Northwestern University.

"It's pretty important that lots of people express their opinions," Neerhoff said. "The people of the right wing get a lot of attention in the media. You don't see the others, and certainly not from a principled point of view. I am a socialist. In the Netherlands, students and faculty have a right

to vote on research, and when I tell people here that, they laugh and call me a communist."

Zaat, a nurse, said, "I thought the women's movement in the U.S. was more radical than it is. I got this idea from movies and things I saw in the late '60s. In the Netherlands, it is more closely connected to political parties, and each party there has a women's branch."

Theresa Conway, 47, and Irene Blatnik, 58, both of Joliet, are both members of Catholics for ERA and Housewives for ERA. Though both are working now, they stayed home to raise their families, 19 years for Conway who has five children, and 20 for Blatnik.

"The underlying reasons I'm making this trip," said Conway, a former college teacher, "is my disappointment at the debacle in the House in Illinois. I was there. The speeches of the anti-ERA representatives very often contained many of the misconceptions about ERA that have been refuted over and over again."

"These representatives haven't responded to the polls or to letters from constituents. ERA is the constitutional basis for equality, the broad base. What the state legislature can give, it can take away. And I don't think it should be subject to the capriciousness of political campaigns." Blatnik, a teacher in a Lockport grade

school, is also active in the American Association of University Women and the Illinois Education Association.

"We've tried to act like ladies," she said, "and now we have to be more overt. I went twice to Springfield this spring. First time I've ever done it. And I felt like I was talking to a wall. But I want to praise the courageous legislators who are supporting ERA. You should see the hate mail they get. I feel our trips to Springfield are as much in support of those legislators as in favor of the ERA. I think there's an organized movement by the far-right conservative groups, led by Phyllis Schlafly, and that it is being met by sheer inertia. Inertia by men, who may not be against ERA, but what have they to gain, and by women who feel politics is dirty and degrading. I'm in it all the way now because I simply see that we can't live without it and I feel this must go through."

Conway and Blatnik were carrying 380 handwritten letters in behalf of the ERA extension that they planned to see got to members of the House Judiciary Committee in Washington.

The Equal Rights Amendment, which says that "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex," has been passed by 35 states, but 38 are needed by March 22, 1979, for ratification.

Illinois is the only Northern state east of the Mississippi not to ratify. One problem is that it requires a three-fifths majority, rather than a simple majority, in both houses to pass a constitutional amendment. This is a rule made by the legislature and that can be changed by the legislature.

As far as national ratification is concerned, Congress set a seven-year period at the time of the 18th Amendment. Again, since Congress set that period, it can change it and permit an extension.

The buses loaded for the return trip at 6 p.m. Sunday and arrived in Chicago about 8:30 a.m., back at the spot where they had started, Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park. As they separated, many going off to a day's work, the travelers were unanimously glad they'd made the trip, and said they were "overwhelmed" by the demonstration.

Toni Sterling, 39, cochairwoman of Steelworkers Local 65 Women's Committee, said, "We felt we were part of something historic, like we'd read about in history books."

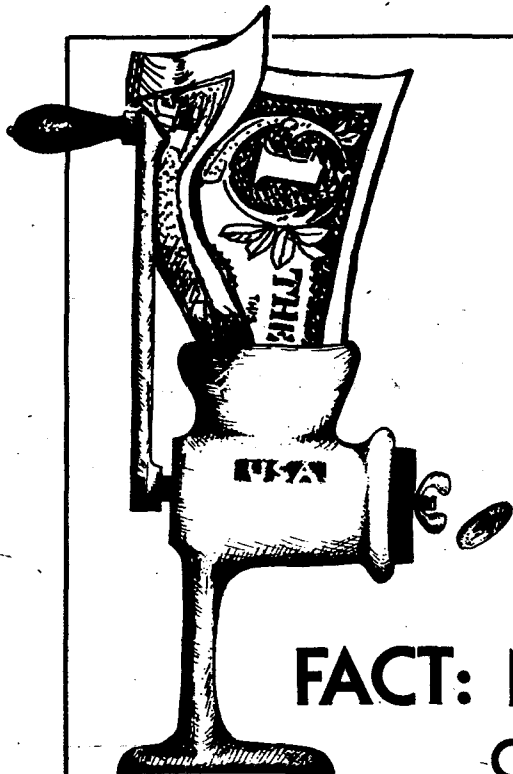
"It was the most tremendous thing I've ever seen in my life. There were black people there, and whites, and Orientals, every kind you could name, and from everywhere."

"Men, women and children. People greeted each other, even though they'd never met before. Everyone was there for the same cause. If people could live like that, like we demonstrated there, it would be a beautiful world."

"I saw very old people there, so old I was afraid for their safety in all that heat. And people who brought their children. Housewives, too."

"I don't see how Congress can turn their backs on the extension, because with 100,000 people there, they have to see that we want it."

Pat Strandt is managing editor of the Voice of the United Cement, Lime and Gypsum Allied Workers union, and a board member of the Chicago chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.



**FACT: 40c of every dollar you earn goes to taxes.**

**FACT: You don't have much control over how those taxes are spent.**

**FACT: NATIONAL OPINION POLL can help you change that.**

I am interested in the National Opinion Poll.  
☐ Please send me more information.  
☐ Please enroll me as a member.  
☐ Please add additional voter privilege to my membership.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Additional voter name \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$36 enclosed for each 12-month membership. ☐ Plus \$12 for addit. voter.

☐ Bill me later. ☐ Master Charge ☐ Visa

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ Bank # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If you are not satisfied with your membership in N.O.P. we will refund the unexpired portion at your request.

National Opinion Poll  
 30 N. San Pedro Road  
 San Rafael, CA. 94903



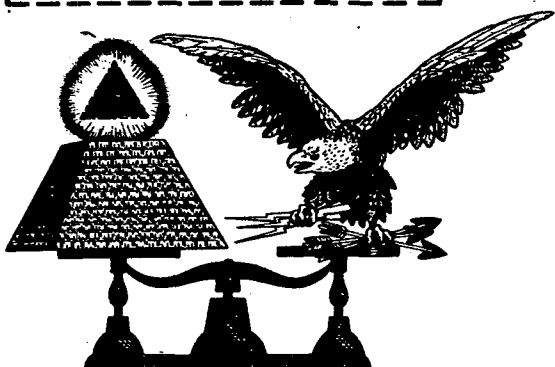
This is your invitation to become involved in an exciting chain of events that will connect you with your lawmakers in Washington. It's a new process called National Opinion Poll, which uses the combined media of the mails, the telephone, a computer, polling kits, a magazine, and the resources of one of the largest public relations firms in the country to get your opinions forcefully across to Congress and the press. It makes it possible for you to vote each month on four major decisions currently facing Congress—decisions affecting your tax dollars. And since 40c of every dollar you earn goes to taxes, isn't it about time you had some say over how that money is spent?

When you enroll in the National Opinion Poll, you'll receive a Voter Registration Kit, including a confidential Voter Identification Number (your passkey to the National Opinion Poll) and a toll-free telephone number you can use to place your vote. You also receive a year's subscription to the National Opinion Poll magazine!

The National Opinion Poll will provide you with key information about the decision-making process in government today. But more important, you can now participate in that process. By plugging into the National Opinion Poll, you'll be plugging into the debates going on in Washington. Congress needs your input, and you can give it to them effectively—by joining thousands of other Americans participating each month in this powerful new process.

You'll be hearing a lot about the National Opinion Poll in the coming months. But don't just read about us. Start participating today. Complete and mail your coupon now.

Call Toll Free 800-648-5321



**National  
 Opinion Poll**

## Notice of Cancellation

The Institute of World Order, Colgate University and the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development regret to announce that pre-registration does not warrant the holding of the disarmament education conference scheduled for Aug. 13-17 at Colgate University. Our expectation is to hold another conference at a later date during the coming academic year when the timing will be more convenient to everyone. We will keep you informed and hope that you will be able to join us. Our very sincere apologies for all the inconvenience involved.



## ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

## BOOKS



John Bean

## Irreverent, impossibly snobbish, but delicious

## METROPOLITAN LIFE

By Fran Lebowitz  
E.P. Dutton

This is not an insurance company history. No such book would begin: "12:55 p.m.—The phone rings. I am not amused. This is not my favorite way to wake up. My favorite way to wake up is to have a certain French movie star whisper to me softly at 2:30 in the afternoon that if I want to get to Sweden in time to pick up my Nobel Prize for Literature I had better ring for breakfast. This occurs rather less often than one might wish."

*Metropolitan Life* is a collection of essays dealing with various aspects of modern urban

American life. Author Fran Lebowitz takes us on an extremely witty and perceptive voyage through the fads, fetishes and foibles of society. On the book's pages, fittingly skewered by Lebowitz's pen, are social climbers, children, landlords, pocket calculators, conceptual art and the ridiculous excesses of any "movement."

If writing could be measured in calories, Lebowitz's work would be very rich, only to be read sparingly. Her style, which has been favorably compared to that of Oscar Wilde, makes it necessary to pause while reading so as not to be overwhelmed.

Lebowitz deals in a genre that depends on the author's ability to

develop a public pose (in this case, of outraged and outrageous elitism). "My political position is based largely on my aversion to large groups.... The common good is not my cup of tea—it is the uncommon good in which I am interested."

In "The Right of Eminent Domain Versus the Rightful Dominion of the Eminent," Lebowitz calls for the appointment of Commisars of Good Looks, of a Way with Words and of What is Appropriate, in an effort to maintain standards of good taste.

She devotes an audacious essay to the pros and cons of children. Pro: "Children make the most desirable opponents in Scrabble as they are both easy to beat and fun to cheat." Con: "Children respond inadequately to sardonic humor and veiled threats."

Lebowitz offers training for landlords ("a room is a matter of opinion"), and quizzes for the Truly Ambitious (Pope, heiress, absolute dictator, social climber, empress: "The best things in life are a) Free, b) Slaves"). There are also essays on food ("Breakfast cereals that come in the same colors as polyester leisure suits make oversleeping a virtue"), and women's banks, digital clocks, modern art, mood rings and CB radio.

*Metropolitan Life* is based on New York society and culture, but its targets are found in any large American city. Lebowitz offers us something irreverent. Impossibly snobbish. Delicious. She pricks the skin of the pretentious and the sanctimonious. What a relief that someone can still poke fun at the human condition.

—Josh Martin

Josh Martin is a free-lance writer in New York.

## A detective novel that's out of the normal mold

## DREAMING OF BABYLON:

A Private Eye Novel 1942

By Richard Brautigan

Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, New York, \$7.95

When Richard Brautigan gives us "a private eye novel 1942," we can bet it won't read like Raymond Chandler. We don't expect intricate plotting or memorable characterization. What we look for is wit, humor, imaginative metaphor, unexpected phrases... in short, carefully written entertainment.

What we get in *Dreaming of Babylon* is less than that.

## Brautigan's detective spends his time dreaming.

Brautigan's detective narrator, named C. Card, is a seedy loser who works out of the pay phone in his crummy apartment building and doesn't even have any bullets for his gun. We've met down-on-their-luck private eyes before, but he's the first to say he's a lousy detective because he spends too much time dreaming of Babylon.

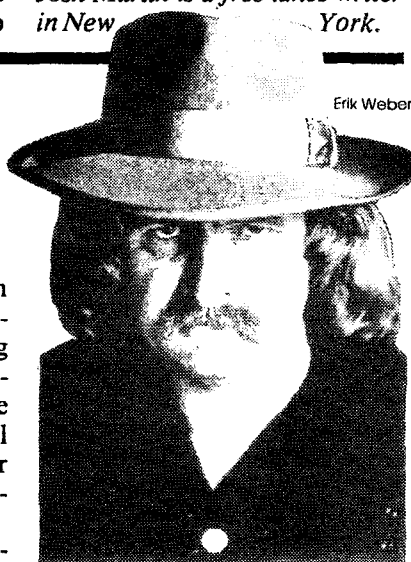
The sequences in his imagination (Babylon) are some of the

most entertaining in the book. In his first dream, he is a "Babylonian baseball star." His dressing room is hung with tapestries depicting his feats and honors. One shows him accepting a bowlful of jewels from Nebuchadnezzar for finishing the 596 (B.C.) season with an .890 batting average.

What this has to do with detective work is clearly nothing. People who like the way Brautigan writes won't mind because they'll enjoy his unexpected and clever juxtapositions and imaginative situations. Fans of detective fiction may be impatient and disappointed.

C. Card's job is to steal the body of a beautiful, but recently murdered, "lady of the night" and take it to the Holy Rest Cemetery. The first part is easy because Card's friend Peg-leg works in the city morgue. The second part is not so easy because some other people are after the same body. There are the guys who walk around like characters in a Warner Brothers' gangster movie ("one of the guys was very large with a square build. He looked like a ham with legs.") And then four black guys with razors who nickname our detective "Stew Meat."

They've all been hired by the same blonde, who has made herself memorable to all by her capacity to drink—seven, eight,



Erik Weber

Richard Brautigan

ten beers without ever having to visit the restroom. How does she do it? A minor mystery that fits neatly into the larger ones: Who killed the beautiful whore, and why? Why did the blonde want the body stolen and delivered to the cemetery? And why did she hire C. Card, the hoods and the black gang to do the same job?

Somewhere near the conclusion the story trails off and the questions are forgotten. The mysteries, such as they are, are never explained or solved. Not because the narrator is dreaming of Babylon. He's there for the action all right, but it has lost importance for the author.

Brautigan has carried us along and then dropped us, leaving us with an engaging detective but no story. Not only is plot less important than style to Brautigan, in this book it is not important at all.

—Pamela Feinsilber  
Pamela Feinsilber is a free-lance journalist in Los Angeles.

"In These Times is a fresh and badly needed voice in independent left journalism."

L.F. Stone

## SPECIAL OFFER TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Eurocommunism  
and the State  
by Santiago Carrillo

Regularly \$4.50 plus 50¢ handling  
**\$3.00** with a new subscription to  
**IN THESE TIMES**

- ☐ Send me **IN THESE TIMES** for 4 trial months. Here's \$7.75.  
☐ Send me 50 bargain weeks of **IN THESE TIMES**. Here's \$17.50.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Back issues available for \$1.00 each.

In These Times, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622

- ☐ Send **IN THESE TIMES** for 4 trial months. Here's \$7.75.  
☐ Send me 50 bargain weeks of **IN THESE TIMES**. Here's \$17.50.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Back issues available for \$1.00 each.

In These Times, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622



# Who really killed the French general

## BIRDS OF PREY

By John Ralston Saul  
McGraw-Hill, New York, \$9.95

Few Americans will recall clearly, if at all, the death of Gen. Ailleret, who was Charles deGaulle's Chief of Staff from 1962 until March 1968. The aircraft carrying Ailleret and 18 others to their deaths crashed 80 seconds after taking off from La Reunion, a former French colony in the Indian Ocean. The crash was ruled accidental; cause: pilot error.

Many questions have remained unanswered. Why was bad weather listed as a contributing factor when the precipitation was hardly enough to require an umbrella? Why was aircraft overload listed as a contributing factor when the airplane was thousands of pounds under its maximum capacity? What could possibly

cause a pilot to turn his plane 180 degrees away from the obvious and only flight pattern? Why did Ailleret's name virtually disappear from the news immediately after the crash?

Building around the known facts of this mysterious incident, John Ralston Saul constructs an imaginative and suspenseful story which attempts to provide speculative answers to all those officially unanswered questions. While the politics of *The Birds of Prey* may be somewhat foreign to American readers, the slowly thickening plot makes for fascinating, enjoyable reading.

Saul's protagonist, Charles Stone, is an aloof, journalistic dilettante. During a weekend on the French Atlantic coast in 1972, Stone meets the widow of a crewman on Ailleret's ill-fated plane.



Her vehement denial that pilot error caused the disaster sparks Stone's curiosity. His search for the real cause is on.

The search leads Stone into a labyrinth of hatred and power struggles among the survivors of Vichy France, the French Resistance and the regular French officer corps. Along the way, Saul provides interesting insights into the internal balance of power in France and the true nature of the Gaullist alliance which ruled France for much of the post-WWII era.

How many of Saul's speculations about Ailleret's death are true will probably never be known. And it is doubtful that the novel will have the "political bombshell" effect in America that it is reported to have had in France and England.

But *The Birds of Prey* is an entertaining and believable story. And it certainly beats an evening watching *Kojak* and *Starsky and Hutch*.

—W.D. Ehrhart  
W.D. Ehrhart is a poet who reviews poetry and fiction for *IN THESE TIMES*.

# War as it really is leaves 'everyman' numb

## THE MIDDLE PARTS OF FORTUNE

By Frederic Manning, St. Martin's Press, 1978, \$8.95

*The Middle Parts of Fortune* was first published anonymously in England in 1929 in a privately printed edition of 520 copies. Its author, an Australian who became in England a reporter, poet and major essayist, was fearful that his blunt language made the book unfit for public distribution.

It is an important novel, beautifully written and relentlessly honest in detail, a precursor of existentialist thought and a fearful reminder of the horrors of trench warfare. This new edition carries a dust-jacket blurb from Ernest Hemingway, who claims to have re-read it every year "to remember how things really were so that I will never lie to myself nor to

anyone else about them."

It is worthy praise. Manning is a fine reminder of how good a war novel can be when written with brains rather than just biceps and balls.

The locus is the trenches on the French front at Somme and Ancre in the latter part of 1916, the focus is upon Private Bourne (Born?), a laconic, diffident Australian who is plainly Manning's version of Everyman. If there is anything wrong with this novel it is that Manning is reluctant to distinguish Bourne from his mates, to make him a more or less sensitive, more or less courageous, more or less rebellious. But the failure to make him an "individual" serves to emphasize the peculiar brutality of modern, mass, mechanical warfare:

"Only the instincts of the beast survived in him," Manning says

of Bourne, "every sense was alert and in that tension was some poignancy. He neither knew where he was, nor whither he was going, he could have no plan because he could foresee nothing, everything happening was inevitable and unexpected, he was an act in a whole chain of acts."

Bourne receives packages but no one knows from whom. He is from somewhere but no one knows where. He is a man robbed of individuality and of spiritual communion with his civilization. Events rather than passion move him, and even "the extreme of heroism, alike in foe or friend, is indistinguishable from despair."

This spiritual claustrophobia, with heroism sharing the closet of human baggage with despair, is heightened by poet Manning's precise, vibrant descriptions of men, machines, and landscapes in the painful antiphony of war. Instead of isolating war as an aberrant activity rationalized by nationalism, imperialism, insanity, or territorial self-defense, Manning has tied war to humanity's

ankles with an unbreakable chain:

"There is nothing in war which is not in human nature," he says. "Life was a hazard enveloped in mystery, and war quickened the sense of both in men." Conscious always of life's death sentence, Bourne, like Camus' Mersault, seizes each single moment for salvation.

"They would have some wine, some variation of food, and some quiet talk, before turning over to sleep. They were masters of the moment at least, fate could not rob them of what they actually had now."

There are a hundred passages like this, lighting the landscape of war like night flares, then fizzling away. They are intensely intellectual insights, for Bourne has lost his ability to feel, his heart is in his head. Soon he loses his ability to think, and notices himself falling into moods, "not of abstraction or of rapture, but of blankness...his mind reflecting nothing but his immediate surroundings."

This is an accurate prophesy of the Drugs, Despair, and Disco

consciousness of modern Anglo culture, which began immediately after that war and continues today. Unable to be Man Alone (society and war have called him) or Man Involved (society and war disgust him), Bourne becomes Man Numb.

Frederic Manning's reluctance to seek mass publication of his novel may have been caused by the shock of being one of the first writers in English to move beyond a tragic vision of life into despair. There is not a false note in the book—no romantic R&R in Paris, no heroic bridge detonations, no local peasant woman crawling into the sack with their English liberators. There is only the true face of modern warfare and little vicarious adventure, which no doubt will doom its chances as a bestseller today.

*The Middle Parts of Fortune* should go on the bookshelf with Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and two shelves above Sartre.

—Jeffrey Gillenkirch  
Jeffrey Gillenkirch is a novelist and a free-lance writer in California.

## CLASSIFIED

### MEETING PLACE

IN THESE TIMES will publish classified ads at a special rate (\$6 for 40 words) in this section. We reserve the right to reject any ad submitted.

**FEMALE SOCIALIST** (closest to NAM), student and community activist, 25, seeks progressive persons (F or M) to live with, within commuting distance of UCLA. Friendly, humanistic, open. Write Anne Gogel, Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Calif., Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

### FOR SALE

**GARBAGE DRUMS**—55 or 30 gallon—\$7 each, free del. Chicago—878-1245.

### IN CHICAGO

The Midwest's largest selection of Marxist and leftwing books and periodicals. Many titles in Spanish & German. 20% discount on all new books. Mail inquiries are welcome. Tel. (312) 525-3667 11 to 7:30 p.m., 6 days

**Guild Bookstore**  
1118 W. Armitage  
Chicago, Ill. 60614

### PUBLICATIONS

**Free Booklist: VEGETARIAN COOKERY, HERBEALS, MOTHER JONES, IWW SONGBOOK**, Lots more. Kimo Books, 2613 Walter Reade #3A, Arlington, VA 22206.

**HOW TO WIN ELECITONS:** read "Rational Politics—an Idea Book for Amateur Politicians." \$2.95. Campaign Communications, Dept. 84, 121 Shadmore Dr., Rochester, NY 14626.

**THE WESTBERE REVIEW**, a small literary magazine in its second year, wants to consider short stories written by ITT readers. Send manuscripts to Charles Sackrey, Ed., 2504 E. 4th St., Tulsa, OK 74104. SASE. (Sample copies on request while available.)

**DON'T LET SCHOOLS cripple your child's mind.** Read "Growing Without Schooling." \$10/6 issues, sample 50¢, from GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING, Rm. 57, 308 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116.

NOTICE is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an assumed name in the conduct or transaction of business in this State," as amended, that a certificate was filed by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County, file No. K61526 on the 6th of July 1978 under the assumed name of Post-Dates with place of business located at P.O. Box 48563, Niles, Illinois 60648. The true name and residence address of owner is P. Rice, 922 W. Ainslie, Chicago, IL 60640.

**THE PHILIPPINE RESISTANCE**—Vivid analysis of urban and rural resistance; how the United Front achieves its unity; the first publication of the National Democratic Front's Ten Point Program. \$1-Southeast Asia Chronicle, Dept. F, P.O. Box 4000-D, Berkeley, CA 94704. Subscription \$8/year. Free catalogue.

**WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING IN KAMPUCHEA?** Read eyewitness reports in THE CALL, the only U.S. newspaper that has been there since liberation. \$12/yr. \$2/ten wks. The Call, P.O. Box 5597, Chicago, IL 60680.

**"CHANG"** (The Canine Philosopher) A book of wit and modern philosophy. \$2.75 prepaid. "FASTING" & "NUTRITION", plus VITAL HEALTH \$3.00. Limited Edition. M-Ray, Rt. 2, Box 541, Clermont, Fla. 31711.

### IN NEW YORK

**MEMORIAL FOR THE VICTIMS OF HIROSHIMA & NAGASAKI**

Sunday, Aug. 6 5 pm-7:30 pm  
Washington Irving High School  
40 Irving Pl. (near 16th St.)

Speakers and surprise entertainment... Program followed by candlelight procession to the United Nations

Admission - \$3  
Students, retired, unemp. - \$2

Sponsored by  
Mobilization for Survival  
135 W. 4th St, NYC / (212) 673-1808

**LEFT CURVE**, art and revolution #7 available. Magazine by artists on contemporary cultural work, national/international, visuals, literature, etc., \$3/copy, subs \$7 (3 issues); 1230 Grant, Box 302, San Francisco, CA 94133.

**ATTN: Community Organizers and Housing Activists.** Special issue of **SHELTERFORCE** (a nat'l housing publication) features analyses of U.S. cities and CARTER'S URBAN POLICY. Review copy: \$1. Special group rates. **SHELTERFORCE**, Dept. 1, 380 Main St., E. Orange, NJ 07018.

**"WORKERS POWER NOT NUCLEAR POWER"** Bumpersticker, Button, 50¢ each (others). Colt, Box 271-IT, New Vernon, NJ 07976.

**MADISON FALL FESTIVAL** State Capitol Square, Sept. 9-10, free outdoor cultural event, ethnic, political, folk, contemporary. Performers, volunteers contact Equinox, 306 N. Brooks St., Madison, WI 53715, 608-257-5815, stipends available.

### NAMIBIA SLIDE SHOW

50 slides and written commentary on Namibian history and the liberation struggle.

\$30 prepaid to purchase.  
\$10 prepaid to rent.

Philadelphia Namibia Action Group  
5021 Cedar Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19143  
(215) 474-9592

Our government sprays tons of herbicides on us every year! What can you do? Send \$5.00 donation to Newton County Wildlife Association and receive a T-shirt. 100% cotton; Blue, Tan, Lime, S-M-L-XL. NCWA, P.O. Box 189, Jasper, AR 72641.

**GREEN MOUNTAIN POST FILMS** is dedicated to reporting on nuclear issues that the networks will not cover: For a free catalogue about our films on atomic energy contact GMP Films, Box 177, Montague, MA 01351, 413-863-4754.

**LOS ANGELES.** Ben Margolis, delegate of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, recently returned from Vietnam, will speak on "The Agonies of Victory." Friday, Aug. 18, 8 pm, Fritchman Auditorium, 2936 W. 8th St. Sponsored by the National Lawyers Guild and the New American Movement. Donation \$2, \$1 unemployed.

### CORRESPONDENCE WANTED

Alan Williamson, 144-064, Box 45699, Lucasville, OH 45699.

Arthur Shelton, 106334, JRCC infirmary, State Farm, VA 23160.

John Johnson, #39826, Box 1000 Steilacoom, Washington 98388.

James Walter Sanders, 026418, P.O. Box 747, Starke, FL 32091.

**CLASSIFIED RATES:**  
**25¢ PER WORD PREPAID**



# Finding a good place in the world

**THE HIGH COST OF LIVING**  
By Marge Piercy  
Harper & Row, New York, \$10

Marge Piercy—novelist, poet and essayist—is a very wise woman and one of our truly socialist feminist writers.

To me, as to many others who are active in the women's movement, Piercy is a sister in experience and spirit. Her writings provide nourishment for us in our political work. Though many of us are marginally employed, we scrape together the cash for a copy of her novels when they first come out, and we pass that precious book around among ourselves until it's too soiled and frayed to read.

With *The High Cost of Living*, her fifth novel, Piercy hasn't let us down.

It is the story of a woman's small, hesitant step toward making a commitment to the women's movement—specifically to the lesbian, socialist, feminist, working-class women's community of Detroit. A graduate student in history, born into a working-class family, Leslie is caught in a tangle of political choice, economic necessity and personal needs.

As a woman, a lesbian and a worker, she's up against the threat of economic exploitation and oppression in every phase of her life. A college professorship offers her a chance of financial security and stimulating work. But it also means a sell-out to the straight world—closeting her lesbianism, isolating herself from

other women, doing bourgeois history and kissing the asses of men in power.

A friend in the movement urges Leslie to offer her skills and knowledge to other women by teaching history from a revolutionary feminist point of view in Detroit's newly-opened women's school. Leslie refuses, promising herself that once established in a teaching job, she'll devote herself to what, as she says, she really wants to do.

Piercy is careful not to simplify Leslie's embittering situation—having to conform out of economic necessity, having to betray her principles for some stability and intellectual satisfaction in a society made up of a few people who prosper by devouring the vast majority made up of Leslies.

The book shows how high the cost of living is for the dispossessed, how material and ideological forces prevent people like Leslie from living up to their highest principles and necessitate galling compromises.

What Leslie only begins to understand, but her creator understands so well, is that moral purity of action is a privilege of the rich.

True to the process and contradictions of life, the novel holds out hope of some happiness for Leslie if she can work out a way of combining her "career" with a commitment to feminism, without suggesting that such a way of life will be free of problems.

Leslie does finally strengthen her commitment to the movement by achieving a powerful insight.

Robert M. Shapiro



Marge Piercy

She finds that her attainment of a long-worked-for goal is meaningless because it's a merely personal achievement, with no significance for anyone beside herself. Only when she finds a way to share that achievement with other women does it become meaningful for her.

This insight determines the outcome of the novel and is a key to its politics. Piercy doesn't offer her heroine the conventional route to happiness by falling in love, but presents a new one: working toward radical social

change with other members of an oppressed group.

*The High Cost of Living* is a grim and somewhat graceless novel, lacking the flashes of joy, lyricism and fancy of Piercy's earlier works. It is disturbing, stimulating and even harrowing to read at times. Its qualities reflect the women's movement today and its change over time.

Much of the early feeling of elation and sisterhood has had to yield to less pleasant emotions because of the inescapable issues facing us: the pervasive violence

against women (woman abuse, abortion restrictions, rape, forced sterilization) and the increasing economic and emotional pressures on us, including most women's "double day" (on the job eight hours, plus all domestic responsibilities).

*The High Cost of Living* is a novel of its time, and that's very high praise. —Linda Greene  
Linda Greene is active in the Bloomington (Ind.) Organization for Abused Women and lives with a cat named after Marge Piercy's novel, *Small Changes*.

## From outside the social norm

### ROOTLESS GENERATION OF PEACE EMPIRE

By W.D. Ehrhart  
Samisdat Press (Box 231, Richford, VT 05476, \$1 each)

Ex-Marine Corps sergeant and poet are two categories not likely to be associated. The same goes for ex-Marine Corps sergeant and anti-war demonstrator.

"It was literally years before the rest of the 'peace movement' would have anything to do with the anti-war NamVets," writes W.D. Ehrhart. "They figured we were tainted, or crazy, or I don't know what the fuck they thought—but we got it from both sides for a long time. Really helped the readjustment situation. Eventually, most of the movement came to understand that we were sincere and knew what we were about."

What some were about became clear in *Demilitarized Zones: Veterans After Vietnam*, a collection of poetry by 100 veterans and sympathizers, published in the Bicentennial year. Ehrhart and Jan Barry, a fellow NamVet for peace, edited and contributed material they hoped would help to demystify the national heritage.

Since then, Ehrhart has published, solo, three more volumes of poetry, chapbooks by Samisdat Press. *Rootless* and *A Generation of Peace* came out in 1977; *Empire* appeared earlier this year.

Of the three, only *Generation* is thematically restricted to Vietnam. The others combine military and civilian experiences, including many of the traditional poetic subjects—love, death, and so forth. But all make it clear that Ehrhart is still about the business of demystification.

Essentially, his is a poetry of plain statement, at its best when self-consciously so:

*The clever ones  
dress their sons and policies  
in red coats.  
They arm the world,  
and ride their brothers everywhere*

(from "Bicentennial," *Rootless*)  
This is not the judgment of an outsider. Once a kind of modern Paul Revere himself, the poet has seen the heroic ideal give way to

*The kind of guy the young enlisted men  
admire:  
he can hit a gook at 50 yards  
with a fuckin' .45*

(from "Sergeant Jones," *Generation*).

Ehrhart's war poems, the ones that expose the nastiness, are successful as they are shocking and spare of decorative language. Metaphor works only when it is the natural choice of nightmare:

*This last time  
it returned as yellow frightened  
faces  
spilling from the bellies of birds*  
(from "To the Asian Victors," *Generation*).

The civilian poems come out of the poet's personal life and adventures. (He has been, among other things, a reporter, a legal assistant to the Pennsylvania Department of Justice, a merchant seaman, a construction worker, a college student—Swarthmore '73, and an M.A. candidate in poetry at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.) Their language tends to be more figurative, their images more conventional. But many of them speak unconventionally to the problem of complacency, moral lethargy. And most explore the fears and doubts and understanding that come from being outside the social norm—a locus Ehrhart knows something about.

—Janis Butler Holm  
Janis Butler Holm teaches at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

## Imagine

The conversation turned to Vietnam.

He'd been there, and they asked him what it had been like: had he been in battle? Had he ever been afraid?

Patiently, he tried to answer questions he had tried to answer many times before.

They listened, and they strained to visualize the words: newsreels and photographs, books and Wilfred Owen tumbled through their minds. Pulses quickened.

They didn't notice, as he talked, his eyes; as he talked, his eyes begin to focus through the wall, at nothing or at something deep inside. When he finished speaking, someone asked him had he ever killed?

(from *Generation*)



W.D. Ehrhart

Demystification is the essence of his poems.



E

R

A

SHARON ROSENBERG



Thirty-two hours on a bus, even an airconditioned bus with a toilet in the back, is no way to spend a July weekend. "It's only \$50 roundtrip," said a cheery voice from the Chicago Committee for the ERA. It was the first of half-a-dozen phone calls an enthusiastic person named Mary Selvas at committee headquarters made to me during the two weeks it took me to decide on the ordeal. "We'll be saving money, since we spend both nights on the bus," Mary emphasized. After my initial groan, she left off the "both nights" part.

Surprisingly, some 200 other Chicago-area women, about a dozen men, and a handful of children also took advantage of this money-saving, body breaking offer to go to NOW's July 9 demonstration for the Equal Rights Amendment in Washington, D.C.

When we got to Washington, we found ourselves part of an estimated 800 from Illinois and 100,000 from throughout the U.S. to take part in the march and rally in behalf of the ERA and for an extension of the time needed for its ratification.

But when we left Chicago, we had no idea we were heading off to the biggest Washington demonstration since those against the war in Vietnam. We had taken the words of the rally planners that a crowd of "up to 30,000" might be expected.

We had been told to bring something white to wear—"in honor of the suffragettes" of 60 years ago. Most also brought lunches, and a few remembered pillows and blankets.

The buses pulled out promptly at 2 p.m. the day before the rally, heading for the Chicago Skyway and the turnpikes east.

"I see the need for the ERA a lot in everyday things that happen to you," said Deborah Ostwald, 27, one of the bus riders. She's a vocational-rehabilitation counselor with the Illinois Department of Mental Health and a member of Local 785 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees in Waukegan.

"Someone hit my car, and the insurance company was dropping me," Ostwald added. "It didn't respond to my letters. My father called the underwriters, and they said if

NORMA HANZ



Photos/Pat Strandt

EX-PRESS

Thirty-two hours on the bus leaves a lot of time to think and reflect on the meaning of ERA.

he'd write a letter, he'd get more attention, and they were right.

"The only response I got from the insurance company began, 'In response to your father's letter...'"

"I'm 27 years old," Ostwald said, a choke in her voice.

Vicki Jorgensen, 22, a clerk at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, said she was going to the demonstration because "The ERA is important in work and industries. Women get inadequate wages, and people decide you can't do a job because you're a woman. My sister had to train a man who knew nothing about it to do her job and be her boss."

Unlike Ostwald, who said she was nostalgic for the anti-war demonstrations she took part in years ago, this was Jorgensen's first such experience. "I was 12 years old during the Vietnam war," she said.

DEBORAH OSTWALD



Norma Hanz, 50, went to Springfield, Illinois' capital, once on behalf of ERA. "I believe in it," she said. "I—half the human race and should have the same rights the other half has. I was born that way. I never had my consciousness raised. There are millions of instances of discrimination. I work in an office. You have to be blind, deaf, and dumb to think you're not discriminated against there. Only the men have the executive positions. ERA won't make things more equal right away, but it is going that way. It will get rid of the silly little laws. I have a granddaughter...you don't do things just for yourself."

"I used to work in the same place as Norma," said Janet Lucas, 24. I'm going back to school to study social work and special education. I'm tired of being treated like something less than a human being, like a piece of meat, a piece of property. Offices treat you on an unprofessional level, like a housekeeper away from home, the wife that can't be there. I just don't understand why I should have to fight for something that should be mine."

"We need equal rights for people," said Clara Whitfield, 35. "After Martin Luther King's death, we were in an emotional depression. No more people were speaking out. Women are identified by the man who's name you're carrying, never mind if he's a deadbeat, a drunk, no good. And women can't get help unless they have minor children to support. No more children, no more help."

"My political consciousness has been active on and off for the last five years," said Sharon Rosenberg, 31, a medical technologist and a member of the Committee for the ERA. "The late '60s and early '70s were times for political change. I was married then and I was just a housewife and I didn't enjoy it. Very unproductive, very stagnant. I

(Continued on page 20.)